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A NEW YEAR, A NEW FORMAT

We are excited to start the New Year with a new format for Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine and the added portability that this brings. I would love you to take the new issue on your adventures and take a photograph of you and the magazine in an unusual place. Post your photo on our Facebook page and we will pick three winners to receive a Bushcraft Magazine binder for the new magazine's format (See T&Cs p4.)

**Editor's
Competition
Win a
Binder**

So here it is, a compact, portable magazine with even more pages! You will still find the same great content - just more of it, such as 'Combat Survival' stories from the legendary 'Lofty' Wiseman (p38), 'Making a Leather Sheath' by Ben & Lois Orford (p42) and 'Working your Canoe', put your canoe through its paces and let it carry the load on your outdoor adventure with expert advice by Tim Gent (p56).

If you want to get hands-on then Adam Logan will show you how to make a primitive vice (p66), and keep your head warm this winter with Ian Nairn, our money saving expert, as he shows you how to make a trappers hat on a budget (p34).

Joppe Ranta, Finish outdoor journalist takes a look at bushcraft in Finland commencing our new series of articles on 'Bushcraft Around the World' (p28) and Geoffrey Guy questions if bushcraft can save the planet (p14). We welcome Mark Williams as our new wild food writer, in his first article he tackles a wild food group that can fill an expert forager with trepidation and I'm not talking about fungi (p22) and, as always there's so much more...

Wishing you a Happy New Year filled with bushcraft adventures.

Simon

Simon Ellar
Editor



Follow Bushcraft & Survival Skills
Magazine on Facebook



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Campfire Kettle

Environmental

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cartridges, eco-bulbs and recycled / recyclable consumables are used and we are involved in several tree-planting schemes, to name just some of our actions to be 'green'.

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Competition guidelines: Some competitions in this magazine may be subject to eligibility criteria or age restrictions. All competitions are subject to the following rules / conditions:

i). No purchase is necessary to enter; nor is there any charge to enter any competition ii). All decisions are final. iii). Bushcraft and Survival Skills reserve the right to disqualify any entrant and / or winner at our absolute discretion. iv). All prizes are non-transferrable and no cash or credit alternatives will be offered. v). Prizes may be distributed by a third-party sponsor so you agree by entering, for your details to be passed on to arrange the issue of your prize. vi). Bushcraft and Survival Skills reserve the right at its sole discretion to substitute prizes of comparable value for any of the prizes. vii). Competitions are open only to UK residents with a UK delivery address; delivery will not be made to a P.O. Box. viii). All entries must be received by the deadline shown and late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. ix). By entering a Competition, if you are a winner, you grant Bushcraft and Survival Skills permission to publish your name and county of residence along with any comments you may issue, online or in the magazine. x). If we are unable to contact you within 14 days of the closing date or if a prize is returned as undeliverable as addressed this will result in your disqualification and a new winner will be selected. xi). Winners are solely responsible for all insurance, incidental expenses associated with claiming the prize, applicable taxes and for any expenses not specified in the prize description. xii). Bushcraft and Survival Skills accept no responsibility for entries that are lost, delayed or damaged in the post or lost or delayed in transmission or for damage or loss

resulting in communications not received due to computer malfunctions, viruses, etc. xiii). Competitions are not open to the employees of Bushcraft and Survival Skills, to any sponsors involved with the competition or the immediate families of employees or sponsors. xiv). Competition winner/s agree that neither Bushcraft and Survival Skills nor any sponsors shall have any liability in connection with the acceptance or use of any of the prizes awarded. xv). By entering our competition you give your permission for your details to be used by Bushcraft and Survival Skills and the competition sponsor to provide you with information on their products / services; you will always be given the opportunity to unsubscribe. Bushcraft and Survival Skills accept no responsibility for the contents or accuracy of mailings from the sponsor. Your details will not be passed on to any third parties. xvi). If you are unable to enter the competition by email to competition@bushcraftmagazine.com you can do so by sending your name, address and telephone number to the address shown above marked 'competition entry'. For all entries please state which competition you are entering and include your name, address, contact number and email address. Illegible or incomplete entries will be disqualified.

Winners will be notified by email, should you wish; please send an e-mail to info@bushcraftmagazine.com detailing the Competition for the names of the winner/s or send an SAE to the address above, again detailing the competition.

The closing date for the competitions in this issue is the 10th Feb 2015 unless otherwise stated. Only one entry per person per competition is permitted.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

TREE-MENDOUS SHELTER

Dear Bushcraft Team,

My 7 year old nephew William and 4 year old niece Clara had great fun building a shelter in the woods at the back of our house recently. The next day they insisted on showing me their efforts so I wandered down with them and Lily, my 19 month old daughter. Lily seemed more intent on finding Winnie the Pooh, but great fun was had. I've got to be honest the shelter might need a bit more work but I was very impressed that they had created it off of their own backs (I suspect my sister may helped a bit with putting up the big branches.)

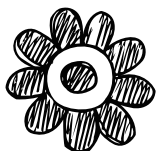
I am of course an avid reader of the magazine and William is also very interested. I gave him my Bushcraft Show 2014 Spork and he was over the moon. He keeps saying how he is interested in "survival" and I am slowly managing to work him around that it's about the outdoors and not necessarily a battle against the unknown and zombie hordes!

We have been for walks through the woods together before and he was full of questions, what we could eat, how we could cook it and where we could sleep. Although, so far our efforts at sleeping outside have been in the family tent, but that's been a laugh anyway.

I have to be honest I am just glad that the kids love running through the leaves and causing chaos, whether it is building a shelter or hunting for Winnie the Pooh.

Regards,

Chris Rogers



Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter, it is always great to hear about youngsters getting out into nature. Whether it is building a den, adventuring through the forest, camping with a fire or just going for a walk across the fields, time outside is so valuable and yet lacking in so

many peoples' lives.

I am glad that you enjoy the magazine and sharing elements of it with your family, it is great to hear that they love the outdoors and I hope that it is a sanctuary that they can return to throughout their lives.

Happy Bushcrafting!

Simon Ellar

STAR LETTER!
Light My Fire
Firesteel and
TinderDust on
its way
to you!



BEST DECISION EVER

Dear Editor,

Ever since I was young, I was very interested in Nature. When I was old enough to discover things for myself, I came across bushcraft. With the help and support from my parents, I took it up as a hobby and I am constantly outdoors and broadening my skills. To be honest, it was one of the best decisions of my life. But broadening my skills was a bit of a problem. But then I discovered Bushcraft and Survival Skills Magazine. Every issue I get, I use the articles to broaden my skills.

Without your magazine, I would still be at the basics of bushcraft.
Thanks a lot for your tremendous magazine,

Yours faithfully,
Ewan Turnbull



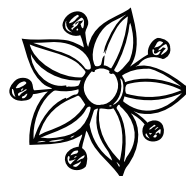
Dear Ewan,

Thank you for your letter. I'm biased, but I agree that it is a tremendous magazine!

I am glad that you are enjoying it and finding the articles useful.

Happy Bushcrafting!

Simon Ellar



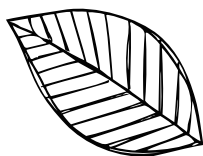
MY DAUGHTER'S FIRST SPOON

Hello,

I write to show you a photo of my daughter Katharine age 8, proudly showing off the first spoon that she has carved herself. She made it from hazel and it has been sealed with sunflower oil. It has been used to eat a few meals already. The first of many winter projects for her and her younger brother Matthew who is working on his first spoon now.

Regards,

Nick Winder



Dear Nick,

Thank you for your letter and photo - it is so satisfying to take a piece of wood and turn it into something

useful and beautiful. Well done to your daughter, it looks like you will be busy over the winter months.

Happy Bushcrafting!

Simon Ellar



To win a Light My Fire Firesteel and TinderDust, send in your 'Letter to the editor' to letters@bushcraftmagazine.com

AN EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Paul Kirtley

Paul is the owner and Chief Instructor of Frontier Bushcraft, one of the UK's leading Bushcraft schools, which he founded in 2010. Also a Mountain Leader, Paul was previously Course Director at Woodlore. In addition to training and working with Ray Mears for 10 years, Paul has also worked alongside arctic survival expert Lars Falt, tracking authority David Scott-Donelan and canoe maestro Ray Goodwin. He shares his passion for wilderness bushcraft in his articles here and on his blog.



When snow falls in the forest, you have multiple shelter designs to choose from.

One of the classic northern forest shelters is a lean-to with a raised bed and a large long-log fire in front to keep you warm through the coldest of nights. I've written about this shelter design before (Issue 41) along with my experience of using it to sleep out at minus 20 to minus 30 Celsius. It's a remarkable way to spend the night in the winter forest.

With snow on the ground, not only do you have the usual woodland shelter-building materials such as branches and boughs

at your disposal, you also have the snow itself. When it comes to building shelters from snow, many peoples' minds immediately turn to the igloo, a domed structure made of snow blocks. Igloos are not a forest shelter, they are a shelter suited to barren areas where the snow is tumbled by wind and compacted into windslab, from where solid blocks can then be cut.

Snow in the forest stays light, fluffy and uncompacted. You can't cut it into blocks. So you need a different method to make a shelter from snow amongst the trees. This is the classic quinzee - also spelled quinzee - again a Native American design. Like an igloo it takes the shape of a dome. Here snow is piled up into

Snow in the forest stays light, fluffy and uncompacted



a mound and compacted. It is left to freeze, like half a giant snowball. It can then be dug into and hollowed out inside.

THE PROBLEM

Lean-tos and qunizhees are highly effective classic shelters, capable of protecting you from the harsh temperatures of long, dark, cold winter nights.

There is a problem though. Both types of shelter - the qunizhee and the lean-to - require some know-how as well as tools in order to build them in a reasonable time. Even with the right tools and some experience of building them before, each shelter will take multiple hours until it is ready to occupy.



Spruce trees have a tall, rocket-like cone shape

What if you need to create a shelter relatively quickly?
What if you don't have an axe or a snow-shovel with you?

AN EMERGENCY SHELTER SOLUTION

Spruce trees are very well adapted to cold conditions. Their resin acts like an anti-freeze, allowing them to keep green foliage year-round, even in arctic forests. They have a steep rocket-like, cone shape, which helps them shed heavy snow.

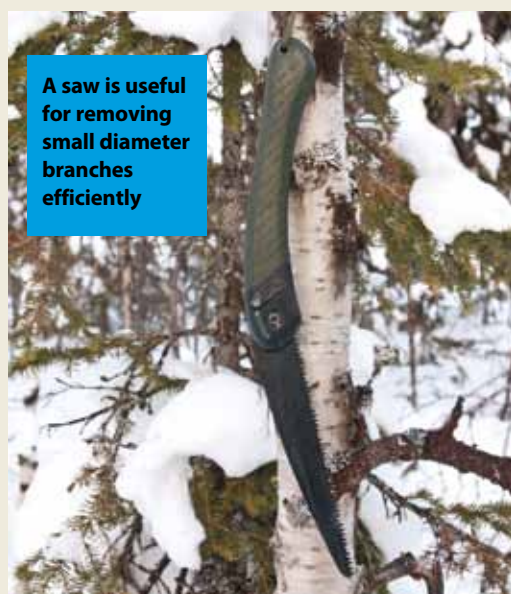
The result of having thick layers of greenery which sheds much of the snow is much less snow directly underneath, in the shadow of the tree, than in the surrounding forest.

Add to this the tendency of branches to grow low down to the ground and you have the beginnings of a ready-made shelter under many spruces.



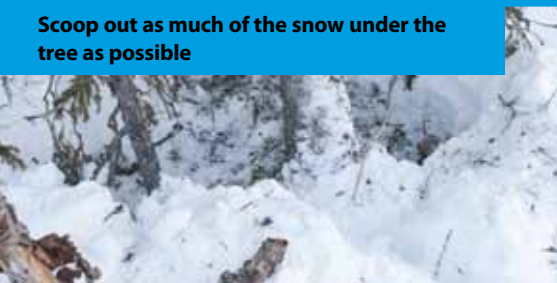
In the shadow of a spruce tree there is a shallower depth of snow

If the foliage is dense, sometimes you can just push your way into the middle of a tree and shelter there. In this case, though, it's possible you'll need to remove a few low branches inside in order to make a bit more room. A pruning saw is handy for this, but even the saw on a Swiss army knife or multi-tool would be sufficient to efficiently saw off these small-diameter branches. If you need to, excess snow can be scooped out with your gloved hands or the foam back insert from a day pack.

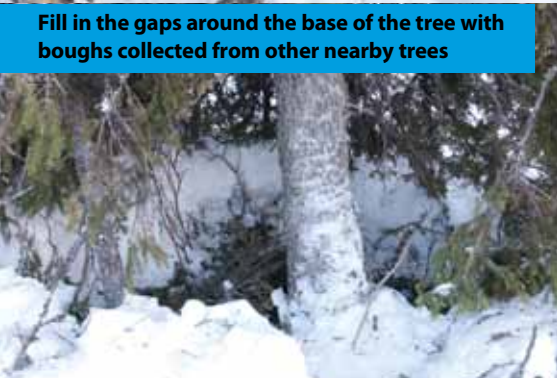


A saw is useful for removing small diameter branches efficiently

Scoop out as much of the snow under the tree as possible



Fill in the gaps around the base of the tree with boughs collected from other nearby trees



The shelter takes shape at the base of the tree



In a short while the shelter is well enclosed with additional material



The floor of the shelter stuffed with a good layer of spruce for sitting on



Once you crawl inside, you are effectively sitting inside a teepee shaped shelter, created largely by the tree. It will be somewhat sheltered from drafts as the depth of snow surrounding the tree will be greater than the depth under the tree. You will effectively be sitting in a snow hollow created by the shadow of the tree.

It's not worth traipsing around for a long time trying to find the perfect tree. In many cases, you can very quickly find a reasonably good tree as a starting point and then improve it. You can easily add to what is already there by removing low hanging tree boughs from nearby trees and adding them to your chosen shelter tree. You do this by laying the branches in such a way as if they were hanging down from the tree itself, again creating that familiar conical teepee shape. Again a small folding saw of some description improves efficiency, but as before if you do not have a Laplander or similar pruning saw, the saw on a Swiss army knife or Multi-tool will do the job here as well. If you thatch your shelter tightly enough, then you can even pile on snow to create more of a wind break. Piling up the snow might be the priority in some situations. In others it may not. If you plan to have a fire inside - see below - then you'll need some ventilation.

Again, scoop out as much as you can of what snow there is under the tree. Whether you find a perfect shelter tree or have to create it, you don't want to be sitting on the snow or the frozen ground. You will lose a lot of heat through conduction plus melt snow, introducing moisture into your clothing. Much better to put down an insulating layer of spruce boughs to sit on. If your shelter is large enough, you can even make a spruce bough bed. Remember to put down boughs on which you can place your feet too. Otherwise they can get very cold by losing heat via conduction through the soles of your boots into the ground.

ADDING A FIRE TO YOUR EMERGENCY SHELTER

If there is enough room in your shelter, then it is feasible to have a small fire in the shelter too. This can raise your spirits as well as help keep you warm. You can also melt snow for a drink. Be careful, however, not to melt snow into your clothing. Prevent this by brushing off snow from your clothing as much as possible.

Fire inside this type of shelter can be hazardous if it becomes too large. Green spruce foliage is easily dried out and becomes increasingly flammable as it does so. The resin inside also makes it highly flammable. Smoke can also be an issue, particularly if the shelter does not



have sufficient ventilation or if you are burning damp or green wood.

When you collect green boughs from other trees, there will likely be some dead branches at the base of the trees too. These can be collected and set aside for kindling and larger fuel. Make sure you have collected plenty of firewood so you can keep a fire going for some time. That way, you don't have to keep leaving the shelter for more fuel. Stack what you can in the shelter and leave another stack just outside if you need to.

You may be thinking about the fact that when you are sitting in the shelter, you are sitting down in a dip, below the surface of the snow. You may be wondering if this means cold air will pool in the shelter with you. To an extent this is true, although it is somewhat alleviated by the car-port effect of having a roof over you, stopping cold air descending straight down on top of you. That said, you would do well to avoid using a tree that is growing in a local low point such as a gully or a dip. Better to choose a raised spot, as long as it is not too exposed to the wind. The shelter in the photos was built several metres away from the bank of a river which flowed a couple of metres below the level of the ground

You'll typically find a mixture of dead branches and green foliage at the base of spruce trees



Dead, dry wood for kindling balanced on top of green boughs for sitting on



Once you light a small fire inside, you really feel the warmth - more so than an equivalent sized fire out in the open. Something of a convection current is set up inside the shelter and you get the benefit of some recirculating warm air as well as direct radiant heat from the fire.

Shelter with a small fire burning inside



on which the shelter was built. This ensured the coldest air locally would not be in the shelter but down on the river.

The shelter on its own is noticeably, well, sheltered. You feel protected inside. Sitting on a thick bed of spruce boughs is comfortable and pleasant.

This design of shelter is appropriate to meeting the need of building something relatively quickly. It's good for spending time resting up or sitting out bad weather. In more extreme situations, they make a passable overnight shelter without too much work or the need for an axe or a snow shovel. If you have sleeping kit, the spruce shelter makes a good place to bivvy and then you don't necessarily need the fire.

Down out of the wind, on a bed of spruce boughs and benefiting from a fire and a roof over your head, this shelter is effective and relatively fast to construct.



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CAN BUSHCRAFT SAVE THE PLANET?

I think there is one particular outdoor activity which might be more effective at helping people learn to care for the environment than any other. Could bushcraft be that activity?



Bushcraft can teach us a lot about sustainable food production, a very important issue in environmental education

Environmental Education (EE) as it exists now is a relatively new field, developed as a result of growing concern that the environment was suffering from pollution, deforestation, desertification etc. as a result of human activity. Although the Schools Councils 1974 Project Environment discussed the difference between education ABOUT, FROM and FOR the environment, EE was not addressed on a global scale until the Tbilisi conference in 1977. Organised by UNESCO the conference brought together delegates from 66 nations and representatives from UN agencies and NGOs to participate in the world's first intergovernmental conference on environmental education.

As a result of this conference a declaration was adopted, after a

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Geoffrey Guy

Geoffrey is a game management lecturer at Reaseheath College specialising in gamekeeping, deer management and countryside/outdoor recreation. He has a particular interest in bushcraft and is involved in research projects looking at the educational value of bushcraft. He has been able to use some of this research towards the requirements of a Masters Degree in outdoor education which he is currently studying.



unanimous agreement that EE had an important role in the preservation and improvement of the global environment. This declaration included the following goals;

- *to foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas;*
- *to provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;*
- *to create new patterns of behaviour of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.*



Adventure Sports students from Reaseheath College in Cheshire having a great time in the Lake District. Outdoor education programmes now tend to offer environmental education units

Traditionally Outdoor Education has included EE among its aims and objectives, although it could be argued that actually most outdoor education does not directly meet the goals of EE instead focusing on the acquisition of technical skills, team building or confidence. But I think there is one particular outdoor activity which might be more effective at delivering the goals of EE than any other.

BUSHCRAFT AS A TOOL IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Bushcraft is one of those activities which takes place out of doors which I think has the most potential to allow for the delivery or inclusion of EE. In my opinion the most important aspect of bushcraft is gaining the knowledge that allows you to practice whether as a hobby or a professional instructor. This knowledge is far more important than the kit you own - whether your knife is a £300 and custom made or a cheaper £15 model.



Bushcraft often incorporates traditional skills such as green woodwork. This saw horse was made with copped hazel and a wooden mallet, a bow saw and auger were the only metal tools required in its construction

Practising bushcraft pulls you right into the environment, it can't be carried out in an artificial setting, it can't be separated from the environment and in fact you could say it is symbiotic with it. Think of the skills that you use to sustainably harvest resources from the woods, coppicing for example. Coppicing has been carried out in the British Isles for hundreds, if not thousands of years and maintains many broadleaved woodlands which exist in the state we see them in today.

If you are coppicing for shelter poles, material for construction projects, walking sticks, stocks of firewood to be dried for later in the year or material for carving and whittling you are using your knowledge of when to cut to encourage regrowth, how to cut to prevent or reduce the chance of disease, which species are suitable for coppicing and for your desired use. Also, whether or not you realise it or not, you are actually creating a niche habitat in a woodland. You are demonstrating a greater understanding of your local environment than most people (as long as you are carrying out your bushcrafting responsibly and sensitively in places where you have



A typical hazel coppice 'stool' before and after it has been cut, this kind of management when carried out in the winter months will encourage growth the following spring, but only in broad leaved trees

permission). But I also feel strongly that although involvement with the natural environment, outdoors, can promote an appreciation of the environment, this is by no means automatic nor, if it does occur, does it always extend to the environment as a whole but possibly only to a very limited area where a person feels they have responsibility or a vested interest. So as a bushcrafter do you only have a vested interest in that small piece of the 'environment' where you have permission to practice?



Playing in the environment is a great start but to encourage people to care for their environment we need to engage more deeply with the environment and learn how to care for it

I would argue that as bushcraft is such a broad topic which draws on the knowledge and skills of first nations and traditional skills from all over the globe, bushcrafters are in an excellent position to broaden our own minds and the minds of those we teach as to issues beyond our normal stamping grounds. In fact the following quote sums up a lot of my reasoning as to why bushcraft could be so valuable in EE;

"Within the context of their own lifestyles indigenous peoples have been practising 'environmental education' for thousands of years." (S. Sterling, Sustainable Education, 2001).

So much of what we practice is based on these skills because quite simply indigenous people relied ENTIRELY on their environment for their subsistence and over-hunting, over-fishing, pollution of water sources, decimation of woodlands or other habitats due to fire, natural disaster or exploitation could literally cost

them their lives. However they chose to teach the next generation to respect their environment, it was effective. The Tukano Indians of South America believed in a 'Master of Animals' who would punish them for over hunting. The Australian Aboriginal cultures tell stories of 'dreamtime' or the creation which teaches lessons about how to live. Every other culture has its unique traditions and beliefs which govern how they live and how they interact with their environments. As bushcrafters we have a responsibility, and a better opportunity than many to deliver engaging activities outdoors which bring people into direct contact with the environment on a level which means they have to think about how to care for that environment.



As bushcrafters we notice the little things, like these water vole footprints or this lizard. Maybe that puts us in a better position to do something about the human impacts which threaten them?



We need to rekindle that indigenous knowledge and pass it on as there aren't many people now who seek as close a relationship with the natural environment as we enjoy.

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IN THE NEWS

NEWS JUST IN...

You may have been aware of the Tanzanian government's plans to kick 40,000 Maasai people off their ancestral land to make way for a luxury big game hunting reserve. A section of the famous Serengeti plains, which teem with lions, leopards, elephants, wildebeest, zebra and buffalo, was to be sold to a Dubai-based company, the Ortelo Business Corporation, to be used as a commercial hunting ground.

The Sum Of Us Petition has reached nearly a quarter



of a millions signatures against this and as a result the Tanzanian President has tweeted that he will not pursue the planned hunting reserve - but the petition still needs your support until the Maasai are guaranteed permanent rights to their land, in writing. The petition text has been updated to reflect this additional, critical ask and we urge you show your support by signing at

<http://action.sumofus.org/a/serengeti-land-grab/?akid=8189.3395848.IsuX9T&rd=1&sub=fwd&t=1>

NEW SIZE FOR BUSHCRAFT MAGAZINE

Unless this is the first time that you have picked up a copy of Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine, you will have noticed that the size has changed! It's smaller in size but greater in depth. With the launch of our new sized magazine, we have changed our strapline from "Know more... carry less!" to "Know more... carry 'even' less!" :)

Last issue, we ask our readers to let us know what they thought about the proposed change of size and our online survey showed that 96.15% of our readers are happy with the change.

Take a look at some of the comments from feedback received from the survey:

We hope that you will enjoy reading Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine even more, published in its new portable size, with the same high quality. The Magazine is printed in the UK, using FSC paper from sustainable sources and using vegetable based inks (soya and boiled linseed oil), perfectly bound with a laminated cover for durability when using this resource out in the wilds, and we have maintained the same cover price for ten years!

Thank you everyone for all your support!

"Your magazine is superb it's worth paying for quality, I will buy it whatever the cost. Thanks."

"Completely get it. I think the fact that you have looked for a solution rather than just putting the price up and asked the reader's opinion says a lot about you. I doubt many other magazines would have done the same."

"Whoever came up with this idea should get promoted!"

PAUL KIRTLEY LAUNCHES PODCAST

Many of you will be familiar with Paul Kirtley as owner of Frontier Bushcraft and writer for Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine, but also for his leading outdoor blog at <http://paulkirtley.co.uk>

Visitors from around the world read and learn from Paul's extensive knowledge as a professional bushcraft instructor and he is passionate about sharing his understanding of living with nature and wilderness travel.

We are delighted to announce that Paul Kirtley has now launched a podcast, titled "The Paul Kirtley Podcast". The podcasts are initially available at <http://paulkirtley.co.uk> and will soon be available on iTunes and Stitcher.

Paul Kirtley told Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine, "My podcasts involve interviews and conversations as well as information which would be difficult to get out there in another format. The aim is to share solid, good quality information and advice as well as knowledge and experience from other outdoor experts with as wide an audience as possible. The aim is also to entertain. I've just recorded episode 3 which is probably the most entertaining yet. I'm looking forward to finding out what listeners think!"

"I have every single issue and keep them all in the binders. I presume new sized binders will be available for the new ones. It's all positives as far as I can see."

"This magazine has been my favourite read since issue one and I have them all. Changing the size format will I believe add to portability and storage... It's got to be a winner. GO FOR IT!!"



Episode 1 of The Paul Kirtley Podcast features a discussion with Dr Sarita Robinson, Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). Paul and Dr Robinson cover a range of topics from lessons learned from studying underwater helicopter evacuations, to whether or not you can screen people to see if they have what it takes to be a survivor.

Episode 2 of The Paul Kirtley Podcast features a discussion with British canoeing maestro, Ray Goodwin, Level 5 Coach in Open Canoe, Kayak and Sea Kayak and author of the lavishly illustrated book Canoeing. Ray has undertaken his share of difficult and risky trips, including the first circumnavigation of Wales in a canoe and the first unsupported crossing of the Irish Sea in an open canoe. In his discussion with Paul, which was recorded during a 14-day wilderness trip in Canada, Ray talks about attitude to risk in wild and remote places as practical tactics for making a journey in the Canadian wilderness.

COMPETITION WINNERS...

Win a Silky Saw - Simon Mann
Win Wilds of the Wolf Book - Richard Brain
Win Bushcraft 101 Book - Liz Wheedon
Win True Grit Book - Stephen Henderson

HONORARY MEMBERS...

By Simon Ellar



I was recently invited to Italy to look at some outdoor projects and speak at the annual conference for FISSS (Federazione Italiana Survival Sportivo e Sperimentale - The Italian Federation of Sports, Survival and Experimental).

The conference was held in an idyllic outdoor centre at the foot of the Alps. During the event, members discussed aspects of bushcraft and survival and voted on a new committee to oversee the instructor approval and training within the organisation. Members shared their views passionately and at the end of the evening there was a new president of this sub-committee within FISSS.

The rest of the conference involved a hike from the initial venue to the beautiful woodland where the outdoor centre was located, making shelters for the night and then receiving practical instruction on subjects such as tracking wildlife the following day. Just after lunch it was time for me to speak about bushcraft in the United Kingdom. I spoke of how books such as the SAS Survival Handbook and No Need To Die spurred an interest in survival in the early 80s and the influence of people like Mors Kochanski and Richard Graves, Ray Mears and Bear Grylls on bushcraft and survival skills. I shared how interest in Bushcraft has developed in the UK, the schools, the products, the resources. I also answered



Me and Fabio my friend and interpreter...



Speaking about bushcraft in the UK

questions about similarities between bushcraft in the UK and Italy, challenges faced in the industry and regulation and certification.

The people there were very enthusiastic and excited to learn of how we do things in the UK as interest in

bushcraft and survival skills is growing in Italy.

Andrea Vallone a Master Instructor with 1*Survival Association (A member company of FISSS) took his acclaimed Approved Instructor patch off his arm and gave it to me, making me an honorary member of his association, welcoming me there anytime. The name of the One Asterisk Survival Association has two meanings, 1st star or 1st class instructor association, but also 'one ass-to-risk' meaning that there should be no risk to the students or people. In your expedition the instructor is the only one who should take a risk, if needed, to save the others.

Bushcraft and survival training in Italy is regulated by FISSS. FISSS was set up in 1986 and presides over the organisation and realisation of multi-disciplinary courses relating to bushcraft and survival in differing types of environment. It explores the culture and anthropology of bushcraft from its roots in necessity to today's interest largely for pleasure. The F.I.S.S.S. holds independent training and exam sessions for instructors in outdoor and survival skills, releases specific certificates and keeps a register of instructors. This training and approval is linked with the University of Turin. Membership of FISSS does not come easily and the process to get on their register is long and rigorous. Instructors then progress by taking exams and demonstrating their skills to attain different levels within FISSS.



After the conference I had the opportunity to stay with Enzo Maolucci, president of FISSS, author and accomplished businessman in the outdoor

industry. When my time came to an end, I was asked if I would take back a membership card and sewn patch to John 'Lofty' Wiseman making him an honorary member of FISSS for being the legend that he is, for the wealth of knowledge and experience that he has shared, not least through sharing this knowledge in the worldwide bestseller the SAS Survival Handbook in the 80s and the subsequent revisions and additions that have followed. It is very rare that anyone receives this great honour.

I was then moved and privileged to receive the same honour for my support of FISSS and my services to the bushcraft industry worldwide through promoting bushcraft in Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine, at

The Bushcraft Show, at the many features that we have sponsored at events such as The Outdoors Show, The Outdoor Leisure Show, and Active Pursuits Scotland, for our efforts with organisations such as Girl Guiding UK and The Scout Association, publishing books on the topic and for our work with many companies in the industry. The rules within the association only allow a maximum of one honorary member to be awarded each year so mine has to

wait until the 1st January 2015. There have only been 7 honorary memberships awarded in all the time that FISSS has been going.



Honorary members of FISSS

KNOW YOUR CARROTS

With the possible exception of fungi, no group of wild foods fills the average forager with as much trepidation as the carrot family. I have met highly proficient foragers of many years' experience who don't harvest any of them for fear of misidentification and the potentially life-threatening repercussions this might have.

Yet if I were forced to choose only one group of plants to rely on for food and flavour it would be this remarkable and diverse family. Sure, the stakes are high. But, by investing a little focused time on a regular basis, the risks become negligible and the rewards endless. Perhaps surprisingly, winter is the best time to start learning. This allows careful scrutiny over time of the different growth stages of key members, allowing you to "tune in" before hedgerows become too busy.

Referred to more scientifically as the apiaceae (pronounced ay-pee-ay-cee-eye or A-P-A-C-I) or umbelliferae, the carrot family includes more than 3,700

AUTHOR PROFILE:

MARK WILLIAMS

Mark Williams shares his lifelong love of wild foods through his free online learning resource, GallowayWildFoods.com and as a full-time foraging tutor. With clients ranging from Michelin chefs to bushcraft schools and primary school pupils, Mark passionately believes that wild foods should be accessible to all. He runs courses UK-wide, but is happiest at home harvesting for friends and family in the forager's paradise of Galloway, south-west Scotland. He has worked as a chef and fisherman and served in Mountain Rescue Teams since he was 15. You can Tweet with Mark on @markwildfood



species worldwide. Parsley and celery family are also widely used as labels, but carrot family reflect its best known cultivated member in the average Western kitchen. Anyone with a culinary or horticultural leaning might also recognise fennel, coriander and dill as members of the same group. Botanists and adventurous foragers will know lots more - over 70 species are native to the UK, or have made their home here.

Knowledge of a dozen or so key wild species (including

Plant	Protein in g per 100g of edible parts
Curly Kale (cultivated)	3.0
Stinging Nettle	5.9
Common Hogweed	6.7

Plant	Vit C in micrograms per 100g of edible parts
Spinach (cultivated)	52
Broccoli (cultivated)	114
Fat Hen	236
Cow Parsley	179
Ground Elder	201
Common Hogweed	291

Plant	Water (%)	Potassium (mg/100g)	Phosphorous (mg/100g)	Magnesium (mg/100g)	Calcium (mg/100g)	Iron (mg/100g)
Curly Kale (cultvtd)	86.3	490	87	31	212	1.9
Stinging Nettle	84.8	410	105	71	630	7.8
Common Hogweed	79.8	540	125	75	320	3.2

Note: Wild plants of the apiaceae family highlighted in green. Nutritional values can vary widely between species and stage of growth.

Source: Auswertungs und Informationsdienst für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten, Bonn, 1987 cited in Cooking Weeds by Vivien Weise, 2004 p24, 52 and 91.

important toxic varieties) is sufficient to keep most foragers safe and provide an exciting range of food options including roots, shoots, buds and seeds throughout the growing year. 20 or so species can be mastered over time. To become familiar with more than a couple of dozen varieties requires methodical focused research over a wide area for a sustained period.

THE CARROT FAMILY IN A BUSHCRAFT CONTEXT

In a bushcraft or survival setting, the carrot family is most useful as a food source. Having said that I have had some success using the dry seed heads of common hogweed (*heracleum sphondylium*) as tinder, and the "basket" structure of wild carrot (*daucus carota*) seed heads make excellent combustible receptacles for superior tinder. The smoke smells great too!

Some species have medicinal properties, notably sanicle (*sanicula europaea*) and angelica (*angelica sylvestris*), both of which can be used to treat a range of conditions including digestive problems and coughs/sore throats.

I can find little authoritative analysis of the nutritional values of the wild members of the carrot family. What evidence does exist indicates nutritional benefits far in excess of cultivated so-called "superfoods". They even measure up well against other more commonly used wild plants such as nettle.

Many of the apiaceae have substantial roots which can provide carbohydrate throughout the year. However, identification of roots, especially



Hemlock Water-Dropwort leaf structure and unopened flower head. Note the pinnate divisions, smooth, hairless stem and "rounded serrations" of lobes

where a mixture of species are growing, is fraught with danger - especially as toxins tend to be heavily concentrated in tubers. By far the most deaths from apiaceae poisoning have arisen from misidentification of roots (notably mistaking hemlock water-dropwort for wild parsnip) and I recommend focusing on above-ground parts until you feel very familiar with individual species and their lookalikes. Shoots, leaves, stems, buds and seeds will be our main focus here.

TOXIC SPECIES & LOOKALIKES

The rewards of the carrot family to the forager-gastronome are huge, but the risks are also significant. Several highly toxic species are native to the UK. Of these, two in particular represent the greatest hazard on account of their wide distribution, virulent toxicity and similarity to edible species. They are hemlock (*conium maculatum*) and hemlock water-dropwort (*oenanthe crocata*).

Nobody should consider eating any wild-harvested members of the carrot family unless they can



Hemlock (deadly - left) and Cow Parsley (edible - right). Make careful note of how similar these look. This is why all identifications MUST be based on multiple features.

differentiate these species with **100% certainty**.

Knowing these will keep you much safer and you should actively seek them out. Also be aware of other, rarer/less toxic species like fool's parsley and other water-dropworts (oenanthe spp).

Confidence can be gained only by observing living plants (both edible and toxic) on a regular basis throughout the year, noting the development of multiple features. Flicking through a reference book or looking at a few images online is not sufficient.

You need to get down and dirty with these plants on a regular basis. Every year I run "Confidence With Carrots" courses for already experienced herbalists, foragers and bushcrafters looking to refresh or improve their knowledge.

IDENTIFYING APIACEAE

To non-botanists and non-foragers, the key characteristics of the carrot family are umbels of pale (usually white or off-white, occasionally yellow) flowers and multiply (pinnately) divided leaves. Many have pungent aromatics, though these can vary widely from species to species. Such vague observations go no way whatsoever towards distinguishing between edible and toxic species.

Below I give a step-by-step guide to how to get to grips with the carrot family that should take you from novice to confident carrot-cruncher in a year. That is the minimum time you will need, though species like ground elder and sweet cicely should come quickly. Two years is better. Please take time to read and understand the key identification features described below and the table of key species first. Remember that this is advice to use in conjunction with quality field guides and reference books. If you intend to eat them, it is essential to base



Hemlock stem. The purple blotches are very distinctive, though sometimes not so obvious as this

identification of apiaceae on multiple features. These are:

DISTRIBUTION/ LOCATION

Consider distribution early - it will help you to narrow down likely suspects. For example, you are unlikely to find sweet cicely in southern England, or alexanders in western Scotland. Be aware of how common species are in general - for example, hemlock water-dropwort is hyper-abundant in south west Scotland, while hemlock is found only in a few coastal locations. This doesn't mean you can be complacent about ever finding poisonous species that are rare in your area, but you can have realistic expectations about what you are likely to find.

SEASON

Where laymen see cow parsley flowers in the hedgerows from spring to late autumn, the experienced apiaceae forager will be aware of a distinct succession of dominant umbellifers. For example, in

south west Scotland in a normal year, I would expect to see flowers of hemlock water-dropwort early (maybe March), followed by cow parsley, then ground elder, sweet cicely, hogweed, and finally angelica flowering in September. Note that all these flowering seasons can overlap. As I write in December, I know at a glance that the strong new growth of vibrant green pinnately divided leaves in the hedgerows are almost certainly hemlock water-dropwort or cow parsley. In southern England, alexanders will be looking strong too just now.

Apart from a few very distinctive species, at least three of the following features should be observed to accurately match the species description. Remember, only some of these features will be present at any one time. I have listed them roughly in order of what you should consider when attempting an ID and according to when the features may be observable.

HABITAT

All identifications (of any wild food) should start with habitat. Habitat will never give you a definitive positive ID, but it will rule out a lot of species. So, for example (and most usefully), hemlock water-dropwort always has its feet wet. If you are on well drained sandy dunes, you can eliminate it from your enquiries (though be aware it often grows on foreshores where springs emerge and damp field edges). Conversely, if you are on a soggy riverbank, expect it to be lurking.

SMELL

Flower smell isn't particularly useful here - most apiaceae are pollinated by flies, hoverflies and midges, which they attract through a range of dung and decay-like smells. Instead pick and crush the leaves, stem or seeds then smell them. Be aware that while no UK member of the carrot family is poisonous to touch, the sap of some (notably hogweed and parsnip species) can cause phytophotodermatitis (a recurring burn stimulated in bright sunlight) - so you may wish to wear gloves.

Try to develop a meaningful vocabulary to describe, evaluate and compare smells. Hemlock is often described as smelling of mouse pee. I'm willing to bet that most people, including those that regurgitate these descriptions, haven't ever smelled mouse pee! Although they are subjective, descriptions like "pleasant" or "acrid" are much more useful.

Some apiaceae have very distinct and instantly recognisable smells (notably sweet cicely and fennel), but be aware that many different species smell "carroty" or "of celery". Smell is not a rule of thumb (as in "if it smells of x it must be safe"), but is an important weapon in your identification armoury. With training, your nose can keep you as safe as your eyes.

ROOTS

As mentioned earlier, roots are tricky, and I recommend not uprooting plants until you are proficient in identifying above-ground parts. Apart from being illegal without the landowner's permission, uprooting is likely to kill the plant. If you are intent on looking at roots, follow all the guidance for above-ground ID here, then very

carefully follow the stem down to the root, ensuring it is attached.

Having said that, you should certainly familiarise yourself with the distinctive "dead man's fingers" roots of hemlock water-dropwort (pictured). These are often exposed or washed up after floods or high tides and resulted in the deaths of many (greedy) dogs around the UK after the big winter storms of January 2014.



Dead Man's Fingers - The roots of Hemlock Water-Dropwort are potentially deadly, but apparently are quite mild tasting. Decoctions of these roots have historically been used to administer death sentences. These were washed up on the shore after a storm alighting next to edible sea beet leaves.

SHOOTS

The unopened basal leaves will be the first visible sign of the plant above ground. This is a challenging stage at which to ID, but often very rewarding in terms of flavour and nutrition. I recommend either making a full year of observation of a specific location before eating, or rummaging among easier to ID fully opened basal leaves to find later-emerging shoots. Focus on hairiness, formation of shoots (e.g. tight rosette, bushy, creeping etc.)

BASAL LEAVES

Basal leaves are the initial surge of growth, usually comprising a rough "rosette" of lush green leaf growth, often visible long before the plant even thinks of flowering. This is often the tastiest and most nutritious edible part.



5 apiaceae leaves. L-R: Sweet cicely, cow parsley, ground elder, hemlock water-dropwort, hemlock. Things to note: white "splashes" on sweet cicely (just visible); large oval serrated lobes (3x3) on ground elder; large, rounded, "non-lacey" lobes of HWD.

Spend plenty of time looking at these. Learning the language and subtleties of leaf structure will stand you in good stead for wider exploration of plants and if you can master apiaceae most other families will seem straightforward.

Become familiar with the general "fern-like" structure, comprising a central stem, multiple divisions with those divisions dividing again and so on, often resulting in a "lacy" look. Botanical guides describe this structure as "pinnate", and the number of divisions can be an excellent aid to ID.

How many times does the leaf divide? (= how many times pinnate?)

Is the leaf hairy, smooth or shiny?

Are there distinctive terminal leaf lobes?

Are the terminal lobes sharply toothed or rounded?

What shape is the central stem? - eg "U" shaped or "O" shaped in cross section.

Note any "sheathing" where leaves emerge from the central rosette.

What shade of green is the leaf, are there any variations?

Does the leaf lie on a "flat plane" or is it "corrugated"?

FLOWERING STEMS

When the plant sends up its taller flowering stems, more useful ID characteristics appear: what is its height fully grown, i.e. when flowers are fully formed. What colours/markings are on stems? Is the stem hollow? Smooth or hairy?

BUDS

Many members of the carrot family form flower buds in papery parcels. When these open, the opened parcel becomes the "sheath" at the base of the flowering stem. Note the presence of these, and any colours or marking on the parcels.

FLOWERS

By the time a plant flowers, its leaves are often past their best for eating. Don't let this rush you. Remember, you need to invest at least

a year in learning. Wait for the flowers to confirm your tentative pre-flowering identification as they can be quite distinctive.

Typically flower structure consists of one large umbel made up of multiple smaller umbellules. Note flower colour (usually white or yellow, though pink hues can develop and look out for odd individual flowers of a red colour). What number of umbellules make up the umbel? Are there green bracts or bracteoles descending beneath individual flowers? Are the individual flowers and petals all the same size, or are some larger? What is the general shape of the fully formed umbel? Flat topped? Globe shaped?

SEEDS

Seeds are usually unique to species and can clinch identification, though very close observation may be required. Look for shape, size, grooves, ribs, hairs and burrs. (Note: By "seed", I refer to entire seed casing - technically the "fruit").

SKELETONS

The remains of the previous year's growth will often persist. These can be very useful reference points for observing general structure - height, proportions, umbel shape etc. Look also for young shoots of the following year's growth at their base - invaluable for understanding plant development.

GESTALT

Once a degree of proficiency has been achieved, it is possible to recognise many species by their “gestalt” - the general “feel” of a plant based on habitat, season and general shape - as memory-mapped by the experienced forager. (Bird watchers use the term “jizz” for this when identifying a bird at a glance). This will only develop after a period of careful observation of precise botanical features. It should never be used alone as the basis for harvesting for the pot.



Common Hogweed shoots, April. Note they are surprisingly thick and hairy. This is a challenging ID for beginners, but well worth investing the time in as these are the nicest vegetable in the UK, bar none!

LEARN THE KEY MEMBERS OF THE CARROT FAMILY IN A YEAR - A Step By Step Guide

Use the following guidance in conjunction with the table provided and field guides.

1. Invest in at least two quality botanical field guides with thorough coverage of the carrot family. (See my recommendations below).
2. Ideally, start in January when hedgerows are uncluttered and basal growth can be easily observed.
3. Select a few locations where you have noticed a variety of apieceae. Look for skeletons of old growth. You shouldn't need to look far, most hedgerows, wood-edges and waste ground should have at least 5 varieties. Typically, 100m of old rough verge/hedgerow should provide lots of learning opportunities. Try to choose somewhere that you visit regularly for other reasons - walking the dog maybe. Thus your learning will be part of a natural pattern, not a chore.
4. It may help to keep a notebook, though the human brain is evolved to recognise and remember many subtly different plant structures and you will be pleasantly surprised at your recall skills if you visit your sites regularly. Notes are very useful after a year of observation though. Cameraphones are also very useful - ensure images are labelled (best guess, location) and dated for comparison.
5. Look for shoots and basal leaves forming. Focus initially on the “easy/common/important” species listed in the table. But don't ignore any likely carrot species.
6. Make all the observations (noted above) that are possible and eliminate unlikely species from your enquiries. Don't expect to nail the ID at this stage, but try to work on a shortlist.
7. Return on a regular basis (at least monthly) and watch the development of the plants, noting new characteristics as they develop. Refine or confirm your initial IDs.
8. Keep an eye out for “new arrivals” - bearing in mind the rough chronology noted above under “season”.
9. Take leaves, stems, buds, flowers and seeds home and spend time comparing them to quality plant guides.
10. You should soon be feeling confident about the easier species. Get used to noticing these as you move about the countryside. Watch them develop. Notice the different patterns of flowering leaves to basal leaves. You should soon start to recognize the gestalt of common species.
11. Seek out toxic species if they don't seem to occur in your observation areas. You won't feel good about harvesting for the pot until you have got up close and personal with the important poisonous species. HWD is common in most areas of the UK, but those in the north may have to search for hemlock.
12. After a year of observation, you should be feeling very comfortable with many of the species, at all stages of growth. The truest test of your confidence is whether you feel good about eating edible varieties. If you don't, that's fine: spend some more time enjoying getting to know them.
13. USE IT OR LOSE IT. The key to feeling truly confident with the carrot family is to stay intimate with them. While

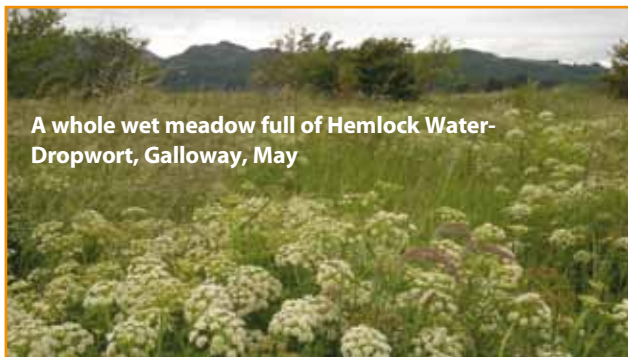
time invested is never wasted, a failure to stay in touch with the plants will make your IDs rusty and sloppy.

Uncertainty will creep back in, or worse still, over-confidence.

The uncertainty I encounter most often, even in experienced apiaceae foragers, is in distinguishing cow parsley from hemlock. Although the leaf structure is very similar, the

stems are quite distinctive and the real problem is usually that the person hasn't managed to find hemlock, yet imagines it at every turn! The hairless, rounded, purple/red-blotched stems of hemlock are really quite different

from the U-shaped, rough, green or purple stems of cow parsley. Seek them out!



A whole wet meadow full of Hemlock Water-Dropwort, Galloway, May

I hope you enjoy the process of getting to know these remarkable plants. They provide me with a year-round stream of delicious ingredients. I'm running out of space to go into much more detail on specific plants and their uses, but hopefully I'll be asked back for some more focused articles! But you may wish to

pay particular attention to the following...

Hogweed - Young shoots are the finest vegetable in the UK, bar none. Steamed leaf buds beat broccoli in every

	Common Name	Binomial Name	Principle Edible Parts	UK Distribution (in appropriate habitat)
Important/Easy/Common	Hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Highly poisonous	Sporadic, more common S
	Hemlock water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Highly poisonous	Abundant most of UK
	Fool's Parsley	<i>Aethusa cynapium</i>	Poisonous	Common, less so in N
	Giant Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	None known - toxic	Common
	Pig Nut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Root, seed	Common most of UK
	Ground Elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Leaf, seed	Hyperabundant
	Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Leaf, shoot	Abundant most of UK
	Pie/Fool's Water Cress	<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	Foliage	Fairly common England
	Sweet Cicely	<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	All	Sporadic, N of Derbyshire
	Common Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Leaf, root, seed, bud	Abundant most of UK
	Alexanders	<i>Smyrniolus sativum</i>	Leaf, stem, bud, seed	Common in S England, rare N
Rarer Species	Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	Leaf, root, seed	Occasional
	Burnet-Saxifrage	<i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>	Basal leaves	Widespread, less so in N
	Wild Parsnip	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	Root, leaves	Sporadic, mostly England
	Wild Celery	<i>Apium graveolens</i>	Leaf, shoot	Sporadic, absent in Scotland
	Bur Chervil	<i>Anthriscus caucalis</i>	Leaf, shoot	Sporadic, mostly England
	Spignel	<i>Meum athamanticum</i>	Foliage, seed	Sporadic Scotland
	Rock Samphire	<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>	Foliage, seed	Sporadic England
	Scots Lovage	<i>Ligusticum scoticum</i>	Foliage, seed	Sporadic Scotland
	Sea holly	<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Root	Sporadic, mostly England
	Sanicle	<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Leaves	Common
	Cowbane	<i>Cicuta virosa</i>	Highly poisonous	Rare

Key:

Easy/Common/Important
Rarer/Advanced
Poisonous
Extreme care required

way, the seeds make a fantastic spice and the roots a rich aromatic gin. My favourite plant!

Sweet Cicely - I feel sorry for foraging friends in the South, where this wonderful aromatic plant seldom grows. Its sweet aniseed aromatics go fantastically in desserts and drinks (I make wild Sambuca with it), or are great with fish.

Alexanders - Foraging friends in the South feel sorry for us Northerners as this delightful aromatic is a scarcity in Scotland. It has countless uses as a vegetable, but its myrrh-like aromatics also go well in sweet things and booze.

Ground Elder - You are never far from ground elder. Its flavour profile is surprisingly complex when you give it a chance - and check out its off-the-scale nutritional profile in the tables above!

Happy Foraging!

Recommended Reading

Umbellifers of the British Isles, BSBI Handbook No 2, by T.G. Tutin, 1980

The most comprehensive work I have found, though taxonomy somewhat out of date, dryly scientific in tone and includes a lot of rare species - perhaps more than the novice needs.

Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of Britain, Readers Digest, 1981

Fabulous book, with detailed illustrations of multiple parts (including seeds) and comparative layouts. .

Wild Flowers (Encyclopedia), by John Akeroyd, 2003

A good book covering most of the important species, including distribution maps and decent photographs.

The Forager Handbook, by Miles Irving, 2009

Comprehensive coverage of key edible species from a forager's perspective. Useful comparative tables for look-alikes.

Habitat	Possible confusion with	Distinguishing features
Verges, waste ground, fields, coast	Cow parsley, Bur chervil	Red blotched, round, hairless stem
Wet ground, ditches, riverbanks	Wild celery, pie cress	Habitat, acrid celery smell, rounded lobes, hollow stem
Verges, waste ground, fields	Cow parsley	Finely toothed leaves, pendulous bracts
Riverbanks, verges, waste ground	Common Hogweed	Giant size, purple spiny stems, huge skeletons
Fields, verges	Burnet-Saxifrage (young)	Small size, lack of foliage, tuber
Anywhere with partial shade	Young angelica	Hairless, 3x3 groups toothed oval leaves
Verges, waste ground, fields, edges	Hemlock, fool's parsley	Sometimes puple stemmed, NEVER blotchy
Ditches, streams, standing water	HWD	Habitat, Opposed serrated oval leaves (not pinnate)
Damp hedgerows, riverbanks	Nothing if smelled	Aniseed smell, white splashes
Verges, waste ground, fields, edges	Giant hogweed, Parsnip	Hairy (not spiny), >6', usually rounded lobes
Mostly coastal	Angelica	Hairless, glossy, yellow flowers, striped buds
Mostly coastal, dry fields inland	Very young hemlock	Habitat, Cage-like bracts, roughly hairy
Wood edges, meadows, verges	Pignut (when young)	Stem solid, hairy, shallow ridges
Verges, rough ground	Common Hogweed	Yellow flowers, smell of parsnip, winged seeds
Salt marsh, wet ground	HWD	Solid stem, toothed 3-lobed leaves
Dry hedgerows, waste ground	Hemlock, fool's parsley	White hairs on underside of leaves
Unimproved grassland, verges	Dill, fennel	Habitat, smell
Coastal cliffs, rocky foreshore	Nothing	Habitat, smell, succulence
Coastal cliffs, foreshore	Nothing	Distribution, habitat, smell
Coastal dunes, sandy shores	Nothing	Looks like blueish thistle/holly
Woodland	Young hogweed	3 - 5 lobed deeply toothed leaves, not pinnate
Still or slow flowing water	Greater water parsnip	Thin, sharply toothed leaves, 2-3 x pinnate

Quick Reference Table of Key Apiaceae for Foragers (To be used in conjunction with field guides)

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WINTER KIT FOR WINTER SURVIVAL

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WIN!

If you are travelling this winter, be it to visit family through hills and dales, or for a trip to the mountains or woodland for some winter bushcraft, you should always be prepared for the worst.

If you are in a vehicle it is much easier to carry equipment that you may need should an emergency arise. Living in the Highlands of Scotland the effects of the winter weather make roads impassable within hours. There was one occasion when my son and I were travelling back to Caithness from the south of England (fortunately in a Land Rover Defender). As we got into Scotland I was listening to the travel updates on the news and they were quite literally announcing the closure of the snow gates just as we drove through each one. The snow was so bad that I was driving reliant on the snow markers at the side of the road, and on one occasion I had to stop and get out into knee deep snow to find my bearings on the road.

What would we have done if we were caught between two sets of snow gates closing? Were we prepared and what would we need? I know that my journey was to the Highlands and so you could say that adverse weather could be expected, but it was the main route between the north and the south. To bring this into perspective I remember a time in the Midlands and a time in the South of England when snow caused havoc on the roads. Nothing like the snowfall in the Highlands, but enough to cause chaos when an unprepared or under resourced authority is slow to respond to the situation, leading to people sitting for hours on end in freezing conditions. A few years ago there was extreme flooding, my wife and I had been for a meeting and as we tried to make our way back to collect our children from school, road after road had closure signs and every detour we took led to



another blockage. The school had made provision for all the children as we were not the only parents that could not get to them and there were beds available if needed.

But what would we do if we could quite literally go nowhere? Having a Land Rover Defender and reasonable experience of off road driving and driving through water I managed to get through several blocked roads and reach the children. The challenge then was to get home as the only two routes to our house lay under four feet of water and the roads were closed.

So, what of preparation? What do you need? I suggest that preparation should start way before getting a bag of 'essentials' together to put in your boot, or a selection of kit to take trekking...

TRAINING

In any survival or emergency situation you will be better equipped having invested in some training. This, for some could be as simple as investing some time to read a book on survival. It could be that you have been on a basic bushcraft course, most of which teach the basic necessities, such as keeping warm, firelighting, signalling etc. You may invest in specific 4x4 training,





A diving torch like this Princeton Tec Sector 5 from www.whitbyandco.co.uk makes an excellent emergency light as they are bright and waterproof! The Flashing Strobe is from the same range...

arctic training and so on. Whatever you do ahead of an unexpected situation to prepare for it gives you a head start and increases your chances of surviving comfortably. That leads me onto the next point...

MENTAL PREPARATION

The training mentioned above can help you to prepare for a specific expedition, but also for unforeseen eventualities. Linked with this is mental preparation. I remember in one of my chats with John 'Lofty' Wiseman him talking about how when he gets onto a plane he checks things like where the exits are, who has bags that could cause obstruction in the event of emergency evacuation, where the crew's emergency equipment is located, what people around him could cause a threat, be that physically, or through panicking, and so on. If you work through what could happen, i.e: getting stranded in the snow unable to proceed by vehicle in freezing temperatures miles from the nearest dwelling, you will be better prepared mentally and it will assist with deciding if you need any training, but, certainly with the two next steps which is being physically prepared.

GENERAL PHYSICAL PREPARATION

So, if you have knowledge through training and have thought of the eventualities that may occur, the next step is to identify what equipment or supplies you might need to ease any emergency situation. There are grab bags available for winter motorists, and of course many survival kits for taking on your adventures away from a vehicle but often these are lacking in items, so I would always recommend customising your kit to ensure that it suits your needs.

CAR KIT

- High Visibility Vest
- First Aid Kit - suitable to the environment and activity
- Gloves
- Rope
- Cord
- Snow Shovel
- De-Icing Crystals
- Snow Chains
- De Icer for Windscreen
- Spare Screen Wash
- Spare Fuel
- Jump Leads or Booster Pack
- Spare Socks
- Hat
- Handwarmer/ Footbed Warmers
- Warm Jacket, this may be what you are wearing
- Waterproof Jacket, this may be what you are wearing
- Boots if not wearing them
- Crampon/ Grippers
- Energy Bars/Gel/ Food
- Water
- Survival Bag
- Survival Blanket
- Sleeping Bag
- Loud Whistle
- Fire Steel & Tinder
- Torch
- Beacon
- Phone charger cable
- Notebook and pen
- Emergency contact details including insurance and breakdown numbers
- Mobile phone

TREKKING KIT

- Warm Jacket with you
- Waterproof Jacket with you
- Hat
- Gloves
- Energy Bars/Gel/ Food
- Water
- Survival Bag
- Survival Blanket
- Loud Whistle
- Fire Steel and Tinder
- Torch
- Beacon
- Notebook and pen
- Emergency contact details including mountain rescue
- Mobile phone & back up battery charger

TRIP SPECIFIC PREPARATION

If your trip is specific i.e. a trip to the Cairngorms, then there may be additional items that you need (or that would be useful to take). These could include more specialist items such as a glacier ice axe, designed to give support when climbing steep hills and help break your fall should you slip, or crampons designed to give extra grip in icy conditions. If you are somewhere like the Cairngorms, far away from civilization, carrying snow dye markers or flares is a good idea in case of emergency!

Equipment & Packing

It is important to know how to use the equipment that you have with you and to pack it yourself in a systematic manner, there is no point packing your torch at the bottom of the bag if you break down in the dark! Be sure to familiarise yourself with each item and how to use it, explore if there are multiple uses and ensure that everything is serviced or in date, particularly food items and batteries. If you are including food in a bag that stays in your car then it is worth putting it in a small storage tub, tin or tube as I have seen winter food supplies decimated by a hungry mouse in the winter time, it is surprising where they can get to. Unpack your kit regularly just to check that it is all ok and in good order, certainly annually.

Replenishment and de-brief

If you have need to use your emergency kit, firstly, be sure to replenish it as soon as practical, key items may have been used and you never know when you might need these again. Secondly take time to de-brief... What did I use? Did it meet my needs? Was there anything missing? Are the items of sufficient quality? and so on.

Taking it to the next level you could create scenarios where you simulate relying on the items in your kit, as if in an emergency situation. Be careful that in doing so you have safety control measures in place because

the last thing you want to do is create a real emergency survival situation through trying to get by just with survival equipment, which in an ideal situation you would not do.

Take care this winter, spare a thought for what could go wrong, this could be as simple as nipping out to the shop to grab some bread and milk without a jacket because 'you are only just going to be a minute' then breaking down and freezing whilst you wait an hour to two for a recovery truck! Stay safe, travel safe!

With thanks to Springfields www.springfields.co.uk and Whitby and Co. www.whitbyandco.co.uk for their support with products in this feature.

FREE DOWNLOADABLE WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE



Former SAS Sergeant Major and author of the SAS Survival Handbook, John 'Lofty' Wiseman, has worked with Halfords Autocentres technical experts to create a Winter Survival Guide for motorists which is packed with invaluable information.

Halfords Autocentres' Rory Carlin said: "By combining SAS survival tactics with our technical knowledge we have created the ultimate Winter Survival Guide – a handbook that arms drivers with all of the information they are likely to need, as well as some which we hope they won't, to fight back against the elements.

The Winter Survival Guide is free to download and contains 15 different chapters tackling scenarios involving rain, ice and snow as well as good general advice on subjects such as first aid.

John 'Lofty' Wiseman commented: "This guide shares some of the knowledge I have built up during 26 years with the Special Air Service

and - together with some sage advice from Halfords Autocentres - gives motorists the confidence to handle any situation they may encounter this winter."





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BUDGET TRAPPERS HAT

& Toasty Toes

Hi there and a Happy New Year to you all, I hope you have had a fantastic festive season. If we are having the normal cold snap we get around this time of year you are going to love this article, to keep your noggin and tootsies nice and warm.

In this issue I wanted to show you a great way to make a really warm winter hat from an old sheep skin coat. Now I know this has been done some time back in a previous issue but that was more of a modern design based on a segmented type hat like a modern baseball cap build. I want to show you a very simple, traditional trapper's hat method for making possibly the best, warmest head gear you will ever wear.

So the first task is to find a decent old sheep skin coat, obviously the charity shops or your Nan are the best bets here. I was lucky and got a great bargain of a really good quality coat from a charity shop for only £5. But the fleece on it was really thick and good quality. I stripped it all down to its base parts by picking the seams and cutting the stitching and then chucked it all in the washing machine on a wool wash to clean it up and get rid of the funny smell it had. So out of the wash and dried slowly, (not on a radiator) and my bits of jacket were great. Nice supple leather and soft fluffy fleece, perfect.

The design I have used here uses only five pieces to make the whole hat and it is very simple in design. Let's face it, why over complicate things eh? I worked off a design in an old book about traditional "pioneers" of the Wild West and their attire. I also used a cheap waxed cloth trapper's hat that I already owned to get

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Ian Nairn

'Make do and Mend' is Ian's Philosophy. He is a dab hand at all things creative, and would be a match for any skilled seamstress! His innovative ideas can save you pounds, showing you how to make kit from things that you might find lying around. He also has a long-standing interest in and extensive knowledge of woodcraft and green woodworking, which, combined with his other skills, makes for some great money-saving tips!



size measurements from. Basically you need to create two side bits, a top section, a back and ear section and a peak, that's it. So as I always say, start out using some old material or paper first before you commit to cutting your sheep skin jacket up. Using paper is a good option, just watch those paper cuts behind your ears, Ouch!

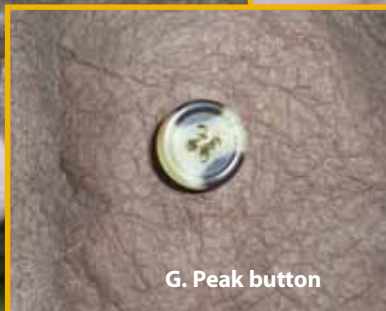
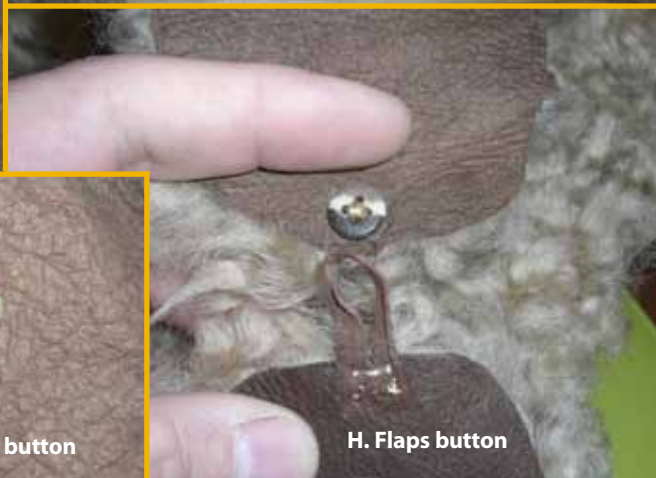
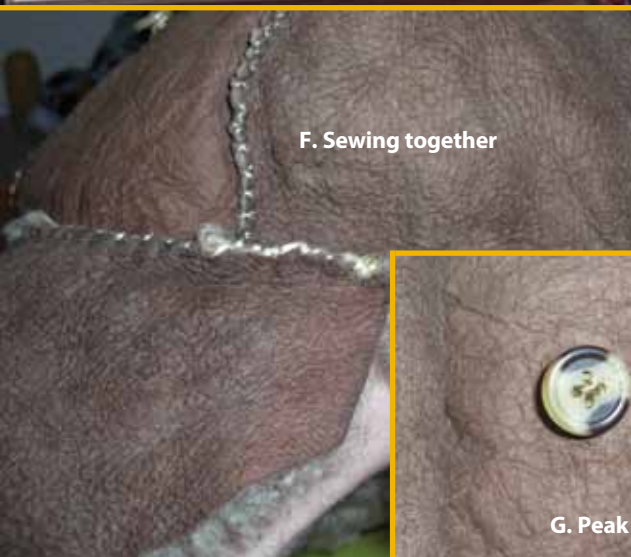
You want two side panels that are basically half circles that go from the top of your ear where it joins your head to the top of the side of your head (if you know what I mean). Measurements are not exact here as we will adjust the size later, make it bigger rather than smaller just to be safe.

Next you want an oblong strip that runs from the top of your eyebrows over your head to the base of your skull at the back of your head, about 4-5 inches wide (dependent on the size of your head). When you have these three

bits cut out of paper or whatever test material you are using, pin or tape them together to form a skull cap type hat.

Try it on for size. Don't worry if it's too big as we can adjust it later and don't forget your finished hat will be of thick sheepskin so give some room for the fleece. If it's too small, go again and make it bigger. When you're happy with that, cut another half circle bit, the same as the first two, slightly smaller if you want and this will be the peak. Again, if you want, pin or tape this onto your skull cap to get the size and fit right.





The last bit we need will form the back and ear flaps. Here I simply just guess-timated the size by judging it against the paper skull cap. You want it to wrap around the skull cap and each end of it to be just short of meeting up with the peak sides. As for the length of the ear flaps, that's up to you, but you do want them to fully cover your ears when down and be able to go over the top of the hat and be fastened together on top in some way, like the old dear stalker hats. Again play around with your test material until you are happy with the size and fit. Once happy, pin or stick this part to the rest of your hat and try it out. Does it fold down and cover your ears, can the flaps be fastened up on top, does it fit your head and is the peak the right size or too big? I actually trimmed my peak down twice before I was happy with it, but see how you feel.



When you are happy with your test one, it's time to commit it to the jacket. I simply drew round my test (pattern) pieces onto the leather side of the jacket with a biro and then cut them out with scissors. Once you have all the bits cut out it is worth spending the time to pin them all together to see how they fit and then try the hat on. It may feel a bit big at this stage, if massively so move the pins in a bit, but **DON'T CUT THE LEATHER YET** and try it on again. If this fit is better then you can think about trimming some of the leather off. If you cut it off early and it's too small it's back to square one again.

So if you are happy with the fit of your pinned hat you can take it off and take it apart and start the sewing process. I have used artificial sinew to sew mine with a standard leather needle. The leather should be soft enough that you should be able to sew it fairly easily by hand; a thimble may help if required. I would advise sewing in the same order you initially built the hat, sew the side panels onto the centre strip first to create the skull cap and try it on and adjust if necessary.

Once happy with the fit, sew the peak to the front. Make sure you get this central. When that's on sew on the back section. Beware when sewing this, it may stretch as you sew it so you end up with the last end being a bit longer than expected. This happened

to me so I had to unpick it all. When I re-sewed it I compensated for this but when finished it is still slightly out of alignment. You could start sewing from the middle to the edges to overcome this, but I couldn't be bothered unpicking it for a second time and doing that. It's only "slightly" out and it's probably only me that will notice. (There's an open invitation for you guys to point that out every time you see me wearing the hat now eh?)

Once you have finished the sewing, make sure you are happy with the fit and that everything works as it should. For the finishing touches you need to add a method of keeping the ear flaps up or down when required. I simply sewed a horn button onto one flap and a strip of leather off the coat onto the other to form a loop to go round the button. That way I can

fasten it up or down when required. For the peak, you can if you want just pop a couple of stitches in to keep it up all the time, but I wanted to be able to have the peak down should I want. So I cut a small hole in the end of the peak as a button hole and sewed a horn button onto the front of the cap in the corresponding place. Almost job done. As this will really be a foul weather winter hat I wanted to make sure it was as waterproof as possible. The leather would probably shed most of the rain, but it may eventually soak in and through, so I decided to apply dubbing to the whole of the outside of the hat. This I simply rubbed all over the leather, paying special attention to the seams and working the dubbing well in. It transformed the hat and made it a nice dark shiny brown which I am very pleased with.

Is it warm? NOT HALF!! It is a cracking hat, really warm and wind proof so I hope we do get some really cold weather for me to put it through its paces. So thanks for reading and I hope you enjoyed this article.....Oh wait, I promised you toasty toes too didn't I?



I think you can guess what this will be - with the leftover bits of the jacket, we'll make some insoles for your boots or shoes. Dead easy, take a pair of insoles out of your boots or shoes, draw round them onto the leather side of the jacket, cut them out and hey presto, sheep's wool insoles. Pop them in your boots leather side down so your feet can snuggle into that lovely warm fleece and stay toasty whatever the weather. Enjoy.



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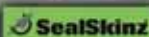
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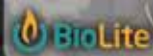
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COMBAT SURVIVAL

I was lucky to have been taught combat survival in the military, (although I may not have felt lucky at the time). Combat survival means using skills to survive when separated from your comrades, usually in enemy territory. It includes escape and evasion and living off the land with the ultimate aim of getting back to friendly forces.

It also covers obstacle crossing and conduct if captured. To stay free, strict procedures were followed like only moving at night, staying off roads and tracks and avoiding all contact with locals, we couldn't leave any sign of our presence. We trained hard to develop these skills putting them to the test on realistic exercises, which at the time were a real pain in the backside and avoided if possible. It was drilled into us that a moment's lack of concentration could lead to a lifetime of torment. However bad it was on a wet cold hillside curled up shivering, you still had freedom and could move. But if captured the restraints and imprisonment imposed by our captors ensured that we took it seriously and avoided capture at all cost. Unlike what I call Robinson Crusoe survival, where you want to be found and use whatever you can to draw attention to yourself, combat survival is the complete opposite.



AUTHOR PROFILE:

John 'LOFTY' Wiseman

Lofty Wiseman served with 22 SAS for over 26 years, rising to the rank of Sergeant-Major. He ran the SAS selection course and the Survival School, ensuring that the standards for the SAS remained high. After he retired, he wrote *The SAS Survival Handbook*, first published in 1986. Selling over 2 million copies, it has been translated into 19 different languages and adapted for the *Collins Pocket Guide* and iPhone App selling hundreds of thousands each year.



Survival exercises were extremely frequent when funds ran low and the ammunition allotment was expended, as no rations, ammo, or special equipment was needed. Just transport to drop off the unfortunate mugs who were chased for a week by another unit that were only too pleased to torment any one they captured. We had different areas throughout the UK which were remote, mountainous and always bisected by a large river. The local population was alerted to report any unusual activities and sightings of any one impersonating a tramp or scarecrow. The police joined in the search, along with a hunter force made up from an infantry battalion supported by dogs and helicopters who relished the thought of capturing SAS soldiers. Most of these exercises were staged in winter just to add to the misery.

Before we were released we spent time in a compound where we were searched and issued battle dress, overcoat and a button compass. We were allowed to keep our own boots, socks and pants. A strip search was vigorous with all cavities examined, (I said previously that this was a pain in the backside.) We were encouraged to hide items on our body which we did with limited success. On an exercise in Corsica we were paired up and my partner tore a map in half which we each secreted on our body. I stuck my half under my arm which was quickly found. Jacky my oppo wouldn't tell me where he had hidden his half, but he was walking

like a cross between John Wayne and a Spanish waiter. When we were dropped off he was bragging about still having his half of the map. After much probing and groaning he produced a roll of paper sealed with masking tape complete with hairs and covered in the obvious. He handed it to me and said he had done his share now it was my turn to participate. Carefully prising away the stubborn tape I finally unfolded the map only to find it was the wrong half, but it did stop me from biting my nails.



It was always just before Christmas that we had an Escape and Evasion exercise in France, in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The French were very enthusiastic and gave us a hard time. We were encouraged to meet agents en route who would check us in and if we were lucky give the odd hard tack biscuit. But these rendezvous points were always compromised with the enemy lying in wait, so we gave them a wide berth. River crossings at night are particularly hazardous, especially the Garonne which at this time of year was in flood. The drill was to strip off and make a buoyancy aid from our clothes. If you were lucky you found an old fertiliser bag and used this. No matter what you used it always had the same result, getting wet.

Living off the land while being hunted is very difficult. Trapping is out of the question as you are constantly on the move. Fruit, nuts and berries are valuable nourishment if available. Finding potable water is also a problem. It never rains when you need it and I have drunk some very suspect water. We did take the odd potato but were careful not to leave any sign of disturbance. We dug in the side of the earthed up mound, only took one spud from each plant replacing the earth afterwards. I now find it difficult to eat corn on the cob, which is a result of an exercise in America. There were vast fields of corn which we used as cover so we could move during the day. It gave us cover from the air as well as the ground. I ate so much corn it's a wonder I didn't grow feathers. We couldn't afford the luxury of a fire so everything was eaten raw. It was a far cry from butter soaked cobs grilled over a bed of charcoal.

What these exercises taught me was a greater understanding of nature, you become part of it. You

quickly learn where to look for shelter, predict the weather and where to search for food. You get a feel for the ground making it easier to negotiate. You know where to seek refuge and identify what is dangerous. All the senses are constantly used. The ears tune into natural sounds like the wind rustling the undergrowth, but distinguish a man-made noise as potentially dangerous. The sense of smell recognises newly ploughed earth, cut vegetation and different natural fragrances. But uncommon smells like petrol or diesel, tobacco, or deodorants immediately draw attention to danger. The eyes pick up movement and peripheral vision gives early warning.

We used whatever was available to help keep warm. Stuffing our clothing with straw, grass or moss for insulation was a must. Sacking and plastic bags were worn to help keep dry. Clothing was taken from scarecrows and one time in November from a guy. You can imagine what we looked like dressed like this. On one exercise, an army camp on the Welsh coast was used as the interrogation centre. As luck would have it, it also was the depot of a Junior Leaders battalion. These young men were trained in the arts of soldiering and after weeks of drilling, polishing, and ironing, had a passing out parade where proud parents turned up. It was unfortunate that as the parade marched smartly passed the assembled guests, one of the lads from the escape and evasion exercise broke free of his captors who were leading him to the cells. He legged it across the parade ground dressed in rags swearing at his guards who were in hot pursuit. Some of the mums were wondering what they had let their sons into...it was not a good recruitment exercise for the British army.

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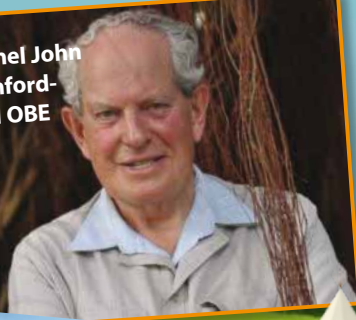
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*Dogs are
welcome.*

HOW TO MAKE A KNIFE SHEATH

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Ben & Lois Orford

Ben and Lois Orford live and work from their home in Herefordshire. With their backgrounds in green woodwork and traditional woodland crafts they make a range of handmade woodcraft tools, bushcraft knives and leatherwork for the discerning outdoors enthusiast. Their combined experience and passion for their craft makes them keen to pass on their knowledge and skills.



The finished leather sheath and knife



In this issue we are going to show you how to make a simple leather belt sheath for the knife we have made over the last few issues. We will show you all the tools and techniques we use for making our leather sheaths here in the workshop. Even though we are making it for a stacked handle knife you can use the same techniques to make a sheath for any of your knives including upgrading a Mora knife's plastic sheath to a leather sheath.

The sheaths that are normally found with a traditional Scandinavian style stacked handle knife are often made from two parts. Wood or antler is used at the bottom section and this is hollowed out to receive the blade, with a leather upper. This is complicated to make and also requires some very particular leather to make it work well. The leather normally used on these Scandinavian style sheaths is made from deer hide which is much thinner than cow hide leather. As the leather is so much thinner, which would be easily cut when drawing the knife from the sheath, it is tanned in a special way to make the leather soft tanned on the outside, but still tough rawhide inside. This half tanned leather dries like rawhide, really tough and cut proof, but it has the soft tanned outside to prevent it going slimy when wet. This type of sheath is still made in Sweden and Finland, but the leather is hard to source and is also expensive.

So we've decided to show you how to make a conventional leather sheath using 3.5 mm cowhide shoulder which is more readily available. It will also make it easier for you to make sheaths for other tools too.

We are using pre-dyed Vegetable tanned leather (Veg tan), but natural un-dyed Veg tan can be bought and then dyed to whatever colour you want with

either natural colourant, water dyes or spirit dyes. The reason we are using Veg tan leather is that it will allow the sheath to be wet moulded to fit the knife when completed. Modern chrome tanned leather will not work in this way.

To start with, mask the blade of the knife with some tape to make it safer to handle. Then draw around the knife with a pencil and make a pattern. This pattern is best made from some thin card (old cereal packets work great). Start by drawing a line down the centre with a ruler, as this will allow you to make the sheath symmetrical. Once the middle is marked place the knife on the line and mark the length of the blade and how far up the handle you want the sheath to go. If you have a fairly straight handle without a finger guard, like this knife, you will need it to come quite a long way up the handle to prevent the knife from slipping out of the sheath. We have made it so about 3.5cm of the handle sticks out of the top of the sheath.

Now draw the shape of the outside of the sheath following the shape of the knife, allowing about 2.5 to 3 cm extra all around the edge for the handle, stitching and the welt. The welt is an extra piece of leather placed in the sheath to prevent the stitching from being cut by the blade of the knife. The sheath may need to be wider near the handle depending on how big your handle is, you may find you have to make a few patterns before you find one that works well. As you come down towards the tip of the blade you can come slightly closer to the edge, so around 2 cm will be fine.



Some veg tan leather

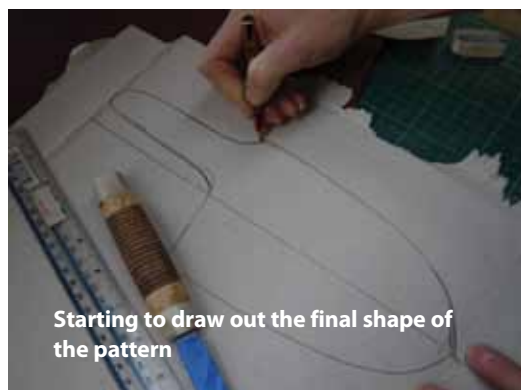


A selection of leather dyes



An old cereal packet is great for a pattern

When you are happy with the shape you have drawn cut it out with some scissors to the centre line. Then fold this over and draw around it onto the other side of the sheath, ensuring it is symmetrical. You will also need to add the belt loop to this side. This needs to be at least 5 cm longer than the width of your belt. This will allow for the bend at the top and 2.5 to 3.5 cm for where it will be stitched down. Try and make the transitions from the sheath to the belt loop smooth with flowing curves as this will make it easier to cut and clean up and also make it stronger in use.



Starting to draw out the final shape of the pattern

You can now cut out the other side of the sheath and then fold it over and pinch it together and try the knife in it. If there is not enough material to allow your knife handle to fit, then you will need to make another pattern with more material to accommodate your handle shape or size. This is why we make the patterns from cardboard rather than cutting it straight from the leather as often it takes a couple of attempts to get a good fit. Remember cardboard is a lot thinner than leather so allow for this.

Now mark on the width of the welt on one side of the pattern, this needs to be 1cm in from the edge, we will cut this later once we have cut out the leather.



Drawing on the welt

When you are happy with the pattern lay it on the leather, on the smooth top side, this allows you to see if there are any marks or scratches on the leather to avoid. Also make sure you lay the pattern with the belt loop on the right hand side as this will make a right handed sheath, if you need a left handed sheath turn the pattern over. Check this before you cut it out as it is very annoying if you cut it out and it is for the wrong hand.



The sheath cut out

Draw round your pattern on the leather with a pencil and then with a sharp knife or leather scissors cut it to shape. Make sure you cut on a cutting mat and watch your fingers as the leather is often hard to cut. It is best to make several passes rather than try to cut through it all in one go. Once it is cut out you can clean up the edges of the top and belt loop with a knife, or sandpaper stuck to a block of wood or dowel (we use a sander to clean up the edges as we have so many to make). Make sure the edges are all nice and smooth as it is difficult to get to them once it is all stitched.

Again you can then pinch the leather sheath together and try the knife, making sure you have enough material. We add a decorative line on the top edge using a set of dividers. We also then use an edge beveller which removes the hard edge of the leather to make it more rounded, we do this on both sides as this will make the inside edge guide the knife into the sheath. Add some edge dye to seal the edge of the leather, this makes the raw edge the same colour as the surface and also seals the fibres. If you want a really professional looking edge you can also seal it with some Gum



An Edge Beveller

Tragacanth, or Beeswax. You can apply this and then rub the edge with a piece of canvas, back and forth, to make the edge smooth and shiny. You can also use a wooden or bone burnisher to rub the edge, this makes the edge even shinier. You only need to do this to the belt loop and the top of the sheath as the other edges will be done later.

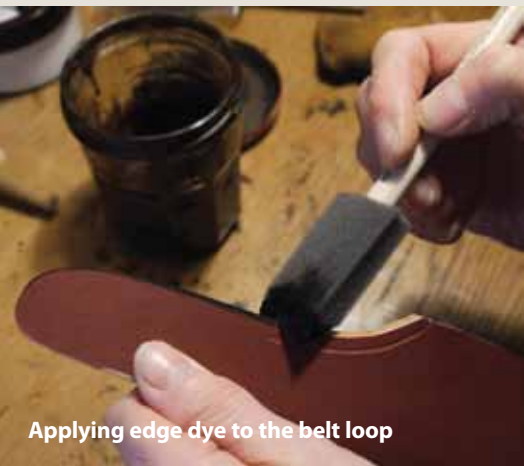
With this done the belt loop now needs to be folded over, make sure it is straight and when you've got it in the right place mark around the edge with a pencil all the way around and about 2.5 cm up on both sides, this will show where to apply some glue to stick it down.



Taking off the hard edge

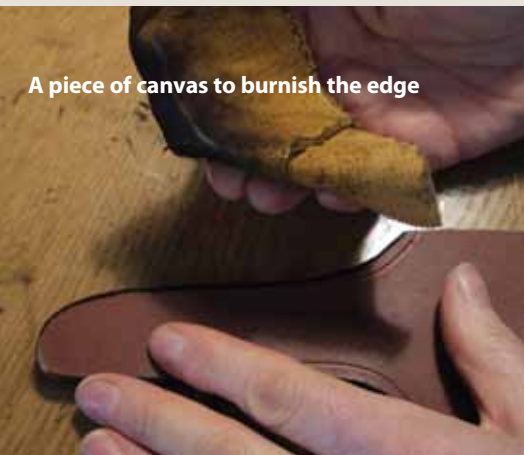


Marking out the position of the belt loop



Applying edge dye to the belt loop

We often scuff the surface of the leather at this point to help the glue stick, especially on the shiny side of the leather. Apply a little contact adhesive to both parts of the belt loop and when it has gone tacky press them together and apply a clamp for a few minutes.



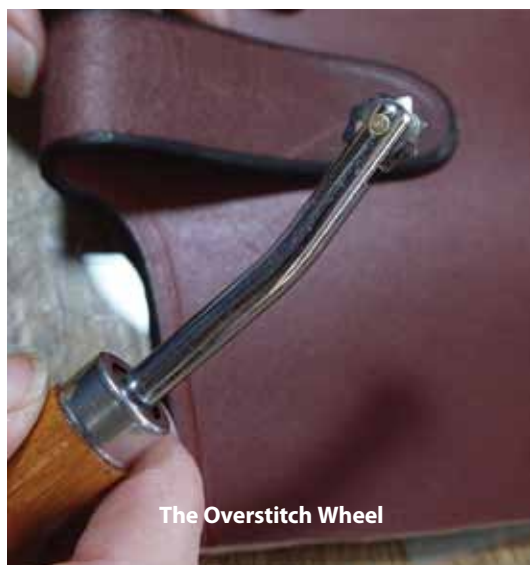
A piece of canvas to burnish the edge



Apply some contact adhesive

While it is setting get some thread and needles prepared. We are going to use saddle stitch as it is really strong and prevents the whole thread from coming undone if any of the stitches get damaged.

This way of stitching needs a needle on each end of the thread. For the belt loop you will need around 60 cm of thread. We use braided polyester thread, but linen or nylon will work too. We use blunt saddlers needles as we will be making the actual holes with an awl. Once you have threaded the needles the glue will have set enough to remove the clamp. Mark out the stitching by running a pencil around the edge of the loop about 5 mm in from the edge. We then use a tool called an Overstitch Wheel to mark out the stitch holes but this can be done by eye or measured with a pair of dividers or a vernier gauge, the main thing is to keep the gaps equal and not too close together, about 4-5 mm apart is good.



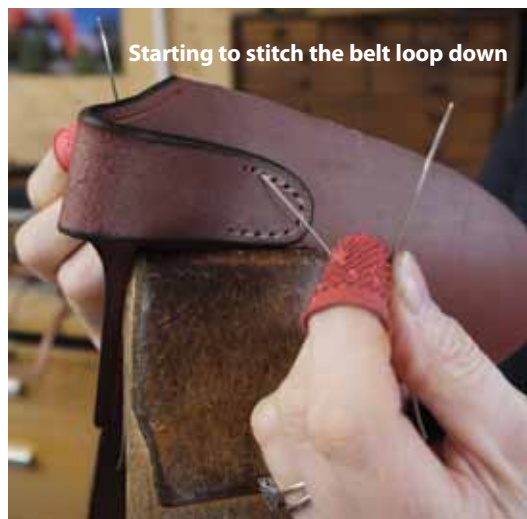
The Overstitch Wheel

Now make the holes for the needles to pass through, we use a saddlers awl which has a diamond shaped blade, this needs to be orientated so one of the flat faces is parallel to the edge, this means when you pull the thread tight it doesn't pull into the corner of the hole but against the edge making a stronger stitch. This is easiest to use by laying the sheath flat on a cork block and pushing the awl through the leather and into the cork.



The stitch holes made with the awl

Make sure you push the awl through as square as possible to make sure the stitches stay straight, when you have made all the holes it is worth turning the sheath over and using a little gouge or v tool to remove a channel of leather where the awl holes are to allow the stitching to lay in, this will prevent the stitches from getting cut from the knife and also rubbing on the handle. We are now ready to stitch this down.




Starting to stitch the belt loop down




Carefully trim off the thread


To do saddle stitch we need to pass one needle through one of the holes, (we normally start two holes in so the top has a double run of stitching) now pull the thread so you are in the middle of the length of thread, now pass one needle through the next hole, pull that through and then before it pulls tight pass the other needle from the other side and as the tip comes through the hole, loop the thread from that side over the tip of the needle, this ties a single overhand knot inside the sheath and helps lay the stitching neatly inline, now you can pull both threads tight and repeat.




Starting to stitch the sheath together




STEP 1. Pass the needle through



STEP 2. Pull the thread through to the other side




STEP 3. Pass the other needle through and loop over the thread.




STEP 4. Pull the stitch tight, and repeat.

You may find when you start to come back along, doubling up the stitching, that it is harder to pull the needles through and you may need to use a pair of pliers to help you pull.



You may need to use pliers

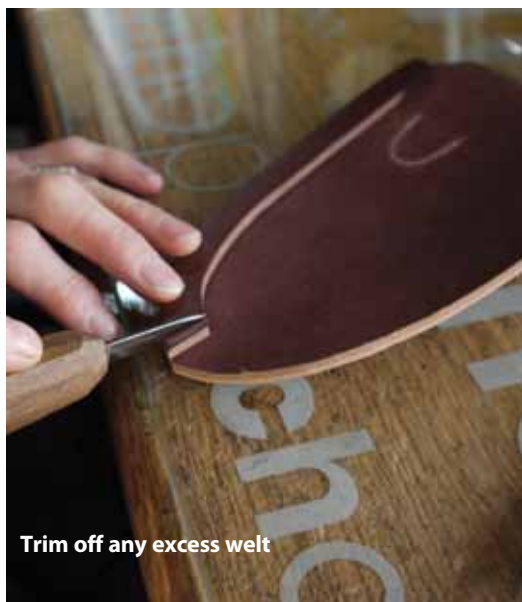
Now this is done we can cut out the welt for the sheath, you can use the cardboard pattern and cut out the welt that you marked earlier, this needs to be 1cm wide and the same shape as the sheath, you can use some of the waste bits of leather for this.



Cut out the welt from the pattern

Cut the welt out of the leather and finish the top edge with some edge dye. Lay this on the inside of your sheath and with a pencil draw on both sides the width of the welt. This will show you where to add the glue. Apply the contact adhesive to one side of the sheath and the corresponding side of the welt, when this has gone tacky, stick the welt down carefully. Once it has set you can fold over the sheath and see if you need to trim a little off the bottom of the welt. Often you need to remove some

to allow the sheath to fold in half, this varies with the thickness of the leather you use.



Trim off any excess welt

Trim it off and when you are happy you can apply the glue to the other side and stick it down. You will need some clamps or bulldog clips to hold it down while the glue dries, make sure the clamps don't mark the leather (we stick little tabs of leather on ours for this purpose).



Clamp down the sheath until dry

When it has set it is a good idea to clean the edge up so it is a nice smooth curve, do this with either a sharp knife or the sandpaper. Once this is done you can mark the stitching line with a pencil about 5mm in from the edge. You can then run the Overstitch Wheel down the line to mark out the stitches, make the holes with the awl on the cork block as before, making sure it is square to the sheath. It will be harder to push through this time as there are now 3 layers of leather.

Then stitch this the same as the belt loop, but you will need a much longer length of thread - at least twice the length of the sheath plus about 50 cm. When you have stitched it all together you may need to clean the edges up, as the welt sometimes squeezes out slightly. You can then edge the sides of the sheath with the edge beveller, but don't apply any edge dye yet as it needs to be wet moulded to the knife first.

Wet moulding will make the sheath fit the knife perfectly, making a better locking fit and making the leather tougher, but you don't have to do it if you want more of a friction fitting sheath.



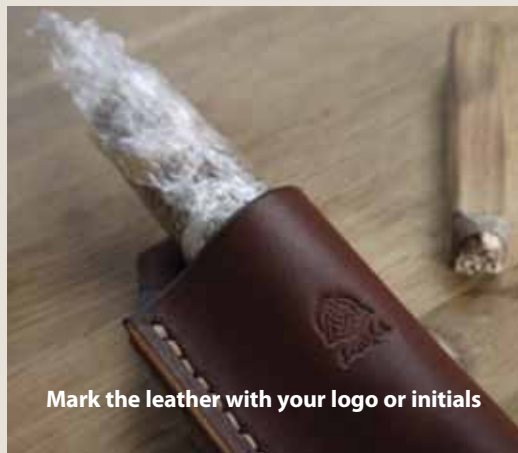
Wrap the knife in cling film for wet moulding

To wet mould the sheath wrap the knife in some cling film to protect it. Run some hand hot water into the sink and then without the knife in the sheath dip the sheath into the water for about 30 seconds or until the leather feels more flexible. Remove the sheath from the water and shake out the excess from inside, carefully place the knife into the sheath until it goes all the way into the bottom, then carefully squeeze the leather all the way around the stitching and down the sides of the handle tightening up the sheath to the shape of the handle.



Carefully mould the wet leather around the handle

Don't be tempted to squeeze it too tightly around the base of the handle and down the blade length as this will make it more difficult to put the knife into the sheath as you will have made the gap for the blade very narrow. Also, if you want to mark the leather with a logo or initials now is the time to do it as when the leather dries it will hold the impression well.



Mark the leather with your logo or initials

- Le Prevo Leathers www.leprevo.co.uk
- The Identity Store www.theidentitystore.co.uk



Apply some Golden Mink Oil to the dry sheath

You can now remove the knife and leave the sheath to dry above a radiator or wood stove, or in an airing cupboard. It doesn't need to be super hot, but it wants to bake dry, this may take 24 hours or more to dry the sheath thoroughly.

When it is dry you can then apply some edge dye to the unfinished edges and burnish them as before, it is also a good idea to apply some leather balm or leather care to it. We use Golden Mink Oil by Fiebing's which will feed the leather and make it water resistant. Don't use Neatsfoot Oil as this will make the sheath go all floppy again.

You can now try the knife in the sheath, be careful as it may have shrunk slightly making it a tighter fit, but it will break in like a pair of boots with use. Clean up the knife, give it a hone and wear it safely in the woods in your new sheath. With care, a leather sheath will last a very long time and keep your knife safe too. Once you start the path of leatherwork you will find you will want to make sheaths for all your knives.

Opposite are two leather suppliers that will sell all the materials and tools you require to get making your sheath.



Ready to take to the woods

BUSHCRAFT IN FINLAND

By Olivia Beardsmore
from an interview with
Joppe Ranta

All photos are taken
by Joppe except where
credited otherwise

Joppe Ranta

Joppe Ranta is an old boy Scout who became a well known outdoor journalist in Finland. He has written for leading outdoor magazine Retki for more than fifteen years. He is also a presenter of a very popular outdoor, hunting and fishing TV Programme called Erätulilla. Joppe's part is Retkinikkari, or Forest Finn in English, who gives tips for outdoors activities and teaches wilderness skills to others.

In addition, he works as an instructor and brand ambassador for many leading outdoor companies. Joppe is a founder member of the Finnish Wilderness Skills Association and as part of this gives talks and demonstrations about old Finnish 'outdoor' products and skills. He launched the Hobo Stove Rally in Finland early in 2014 and it has become so popular it ran four times this year and will take place in the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia in February 2015.



Today in Finland, as with many Westernised countries, this way of life is beginning to change. Cities are quite new in Finland and people who once lived in the countryside now live in the city where different skills are employed. Therefore, in the last 20-30 years the Finnish culture is changing and people are slowly losing their connection with forest living. "New generations are not being taught wilderness skills anymore by their parents or extended families", Joppe says...

"Some city folk still maintain some contact with the countryside and keep a summer cottage that they visit every weekend and holidays. The summer cottage may still require a log burner to heat the home and cook from, oil lamps may light the home and food is prepared in a more traditional or primitive way."

For the Finnish people, bushcraft skills were part of a way of life, living with nature, hunting, open fire cookery, farming, rearing reindeer and fishing were just a few of skills that were common. Living amongst nature in the countryside or small villages meant that people had a strong connection to nature, learning how to survive or thrive with what was around them in their environment for their livelihood. These acquired skills were passed down from generation to generation.

In Finnish 'Sisu' is a word depicting this determination and resilience. Joppe says "Sisu is inside of Finnish culture and inbuilt in the people, it's part of why Finns survived in hard times living in nature with wilderness skills."

Sisu is a Finnish word generally meaning determination, bravery and resilience. It is about taking action against the odds and displaying courage and resoluteness in the face of adversity. Sisu is deciding on a course of action and then sticking to that decision despite repeated failures. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sisu>

Living with nature is deep in the minds of the Finns who would say, "We are a forest country and have the skills to live in it." Unfortunately, modern Finns sometimes feel scared to go to the forest as they don't know how to survive there anymore.

Recreation in the outdoors became a hobby in early 1910, but only for a minority of Finns. Other Finnish people spend time in nature as part of their job, such as those involved in leisure and tourism, heritage, forestry, hunting and fishing, or just for leisure time with the family. The Sami people in Lapland are an example of this, living and moving with reindeer to ultimately make a living

from them. There are some ethnic Finns involved in reindeer herding too, almost 3000 people are still involved with this.

Reindeer shepherd



During the war (1939 – 1945) having skills to live in the forest was important, as the soldiers needed to survive there. For example, Finnish guerillas behind enemy lines made canvas shelters to live in and lean-to shelters using the branches of spruce trees. While bushcraft skills as a hobby was put on hold during the war,

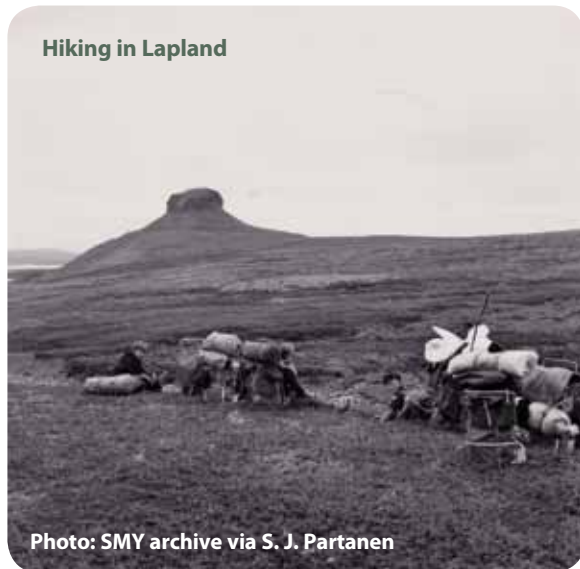
interest picked up in the post-war period.



After the war, Finland had to pay huge costs to the Soviet Union for wartime grievances. The Finnish people worked hard to pay the Soviet Union and slowly the situation improved. People had more free time, so went on vacations. Travelling was expensive and so hiking and camping in Lapland became very popular.

1955 - 1975 was the golden time for interest in the outdoors and camping, but when people got more money they travelled overseas. Holidays to the Canary Islands became very popular and interest in the outdoors, camping and hiking decreased.

Fishing and hunting, which was previously a necessary part of living, was now only a hobby. People whose roots and connections are still in the countryside can hunt on their own and neighbouring land and some other areas, those interested in it as a hobby can buy a licence to hunt. Fishing with one rod and worm is free to all under Finland's 'Everyman's Right' (see p53). All other fishing requires a licence, differing from area to area. Hunting and fishing are now very popular in Finland.



Life outdoors changed a lot after the 1980s when Finland became 'closer' to Europe. As international trade increased, so did the country's wealth. Hiking as a way to enjoy the outdoors developed as new equipment and clothing styles came from Europe and America. People bought new tents, clothing, etc. Hiking boots slowly came to Finland and replaced the traditional rubber and leather boots which had previously been the only footwear used in the outdoors.

In Finland the traditional way to stay outdoors is, and always has been, by an open fire in a shelter/

lean-to. This practice became a hobby for a small group of people including scouts and the members of a few other associations. Wilderness living is of course more difficult to practice, because people living close to towns did not own land and to have an open fire in the wilds, permission is required from the landowner. With 'Everyman's Right' Finns can camp for one night nearly anywhere in a Finnish forest and we can walk nearly everywhere in nature.



Finns with his Lapland dog



Camping with Loues

In the last few years bushcraft has gradually become popular in Finland. Joppe recalls "I think I was the first person to use the word 'bushcraft' in public here, when I wrote an article about Ray Mears in Retki magazine". Before the term 'bushcraft' was used, people who practiced outdoor skills were known as 'survivalists'. Interest in bushcraft grew in Finland and there was a trend away from modern lightweight products and kit towards 'traditional ways' - this remains an important factor for Finnish bushcrafters.

Joppe says that "Interest in bushcraft is now rising very quickly here in Finland". A big part of this is the use of hobo stoves, open fire shelters like Loue, pot hanging tripods etc. The handicraft element is an important aspect of Finnish bushcraft as it is in the UK and many people will carve and make things. One difference is that it is common in Finland to just craft some items in the forest as you need them, such as a cup, spoon or saw frame without stripping the bark or making it beautiful and then to recycle or burn it after use. "My understanding of British bushcraft is that this is less common and people will spend days sourcing the right wood and crafting an item that they then keep forever".



Old campers in Winter

Finnish bushcrafters endeavour to carry as little as possible, but enough for good living and selecting some good quality tools and then making things like shelters and cooking utensils. "We Finns like very much to sit around a fire, look at the stars and be quiet", Joppe says laughing. He explains that Finns aren't being rude if they sit without smiling or chatting, they just enjoy nature quietly. Bushcraft is quickly rising within the Scout movement too, along with other outdoor organisations. The Finnish Wilderness Skills Association, Suomen Erätaito Ry, was founded a few years ago to keep the old wilderness skills alive for future generations, the association tries to collect old equipment and share information about its design and use. One of the missions of the association is to introduce bushcraft skills into schools to teach and generate an interest in the children of today.



Camping in winter

FinnRover is a brand owned by Suomen Erätaito Ry. "At the moment we have launched three models of

Cooking under the stars in winter temperatures of minus 15°C



Breakfast



the very authentic Loue Shelter, this is based on the genuine Finnish open fire tarp," Joppe Ranta proudly related. "Second is a frying pan available in two sizes with a canvas bag, these are part of the FinnRover Wilderness Collection. In old times, a frying pan was in every backpack and woodsmen would make their own food with it and also eat using it as the plate too". These products are available exclusively in the UK from shop. bushcraftmagazine.com.

"We warmly welcome people to Finland and to the Finnish forest, but we expect people to learn and respect the rules", says Joppe. Stories from the internet

It is not permissible to light an open fire without the landowner's permission but you can use a stove where no hot parts touch the ground. Driving off-road is not permitted without the landowner's permission nor is hunting.

For further details see <http://www.outdoors.fi/hikinginfinland/rightsandregulations>

and also some magazines try to paint Finland as a wild wonderland where you can do all that you like. "We have 'Everyman's Rights', which are rules that apply to Finns and also to visitors of all nationalities, this right allows enjoyment of nature to all and at the same time protects nature and the quiet enjoyment of others."

A Finnish Definition of Words:

1. Wilderness skills are our traditional way to live in the forest, make a shelter and build a fire using traditional skills. That's what I like to call the 'Finnish Way'.
2. Outdoor skills are what modern people need to know in order to do outdoor activities such as hiking and travelling in Finland or overseas. It involves using modern equipment, tents, Gore-tex clothes, gas stoves etc. to live in and be safe in the outdoor environment.
3. Those who practice bushcraft skills or 'bushcrafters' are Finns who want to be enthusiasts of the old traditional Finnish way. They try to learn traditional skills for living and camping in nature and often embrace the skills and traditions from other countries to expand their knowledge.
4. 'Survivalists' - survival skills are for people who need to survive when things go wrong. For example they have lost direction, are affected by a natural disaster, or have an accident whilst in the wilds. Survivalists are in general not as 'crafty' nor as sensitive to the environment as bushcrafters, viewing nature as a tool or material rather than with respect as a friend and ongoing resource. Whilst some skills can cross over, Survivalists and bushcrafters are not the same.

If you have a good knowledge base with practiced wilderness (or bushcraft) skills then you don't need survival skills, because you can live in the forest with enough security and pleasure. If you haven't got these skills you are in danger and you need survival skills!

Joppe says "I would encourage all to connect with our roots and learn the skills of our ancestors, both for enjoyment and in preparation should we ever need to call upon them..."

"Love the outdoors!"

Everyman's Rights – Finland

In general this means that where done in a conscientious way and no harm is caused to the environment everyone may walk, cycle or ski freely in the countryside. The exceptions being in private gardens and close proximity to dwellings. Fields where crops are planted may generally only be crossed in the winter time when barren. You can set up a temporary camp, forage (excluding protected species). You can fish with a rod and line in still waters and row, sail or use a motor boat with some restrictions. Bathing and swimming is allowed in any waters.



Winter cooking

In the next issue of *Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine* Joppe Ranta shares the forgotten history of the traditional Loue open fire shelter, how he discovered this from the archives of the Finnish Hunting Museum and how through his research by chance found a very rare original Loue from Lapland. He used it to piece by piece produce an exact replica and detail the whole forgotten history of the traditional Loue. He will discuss the versatility of this shelter from its roots to modern bushcraft.

WORKING YOUR CANOE

It probably wasn't until the tail-end of the nineteenth century that anyone in North America gave serious thought to using a canoe for recreation. Until rising levels of affluence started to produce people with that strange new concept, free time, the canoe had a job to do, lots of jobs to do.

Even when a few privileged Europeans started to experiment with holidays, or vacations, the canoe was still hard at work. Usually piloted by indigenous guides, the birch bark canoe and its cedar and canvas successor, were used to paddle paying clients out to choice fishing or hunting grounds. The canoe was a workhorse, a very versatile one, capable of performing a range of tasks. Years later it still carries out all those duties just as well.

Perhaps this is why I so look forward to finding a job for my boat. Using a canoe to cruise a sunlit river or explore the edge of a sparkling lake or secluded tide-washed bay is one thing, and a very fine pastime, but finding your craft a job is to give it a back its purpose, its heritage.

At the root of most canoe tasks is haulage. While the kayak, originating from a little further north, was designed for a single role, carrying lone hunters within striking distance, literally, of their prey, the canoe was developed to carry loads. Whether it was moving firewood, nets, people, building materials, tents or the results of a good day with line, spear or bow, that big open space beneath and between the thwarts could accommodate some surprisingly large loads.

Although admittedly very much out of the ordinary, the vast Canot de Maître used by the Hudson Bay Company and others were birch bark mega-canoes of over thirty feet in length. They could carry up to ten paddlers and supplies, yet still manage a couple of tons of tightly packed beaver, otter and marten pelts. Even the small personal canoe of the time, the natural vessel of the boreal forest, could pull its weight, or more importantly, much more than its own weight. Measuring only some

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Tim Gent

Happiest living in a tent somewhere close to both sea and mountains, Tim paddles and clambers in search of our remaining wild and inspiring places, documenting these experiences so that others might be encouraged to follow. A very enjoyable role of course, but one also undertaken in the belief that a better understanding of these fragile landscapes might offer the best chance for their survival, and ours.



thirteen to sixteen feet in length, the standard canoe could cope with a hefty canvas tent, an axe, spare clothes, food for a few weeks and still manage a rifle and a few dozen rounds as well.

All those old haulage qualities remain and while most of us won't be packing a rifle amongst our gear these days, there are many that still head off into a marsh or estuary with a shotgun. A canoe makes carrying a goose or two back to solid ground a much easier job than on foot. And you can even take your dogs, once they've learnt to sit still.

Anyone who has seen anything of my canoe writing will have spotted the job I give my canoes most often. This is the task it has probably returned to most frequently since handing its commercial cargo over to truck or rail. So important is the canoe's camping support role today in the US and Canada and now increasingly in Europe and beyond, that it is sometimes hard to separate the two. Good. If the sight of a canoe evokes images of exploration and outdoor living, I for one would be very happy. At the risk of steering close to a poor pun, the canoe is not just a means of transport into the wild; it is a vehicle to another way of thinking and behaving. And once out there in some less inhabited spot, with a tent pitched somewhere level and dry near the shore, the entrance flap open to reveal a glorious wave-flecked view, the canoe's work is far from done.

For those using an open fire or wood-fuelled stove, a steady flow of dry timber is needed. Perfect as your campsite might be, the availability of suitable supplies could be limited, perhaps simply because the spot is otherwise so pleasant and popular. With a bow saw and axe aboard, you can set off along the shoreline, almost certainly finding a scatter of beached flotsam before

Almost a full load of wood



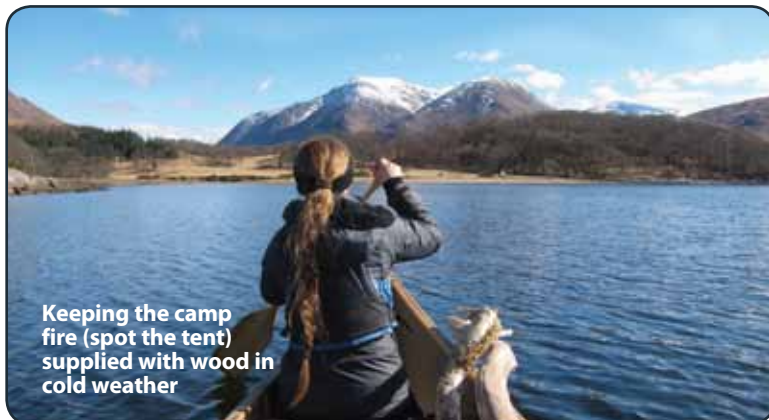
long. This can either be cut and prepared where you find it, or simply reduced to a size that can be shoehorned aboard for final sawing and splitting back at your temporary home.

Even our more permanent dwelling is often supplied with cooking and heating fuel by canoe. We stick to a claim that we're removing navigation hazards from the coastal edge and I'm sure we are, but once cleared from beach or estuary, what more responsible better way to dispose of the results?

When carrying wood, as with all canoe loads, make sure that the heavier items are stowed as low as possible. This can make a huge difference to stability. Anything stowed below water levels helps, anything placed above and especially above thwart height really doesn't. This can sometimes be quite tricky to achieve with large sections of tree for example, but it really is worth sorting the heavy pieces from the light, cutting them short enough to manoeuvre around the thwarts to lie deep down at the bottom of your cargo. And tempting as it is to find a place for that last branch, make sure that your canoe still has at least six inches of freeboard (the gap between gunwale and water surface) and that's after any paddlers are back on board again as well.

Finally, unless what you are carrying is particularly valuable, when you should really provide it with its own floatation device, it is probably best not to tie anything into your canoe that won't float easily on its own, including heavy wood. Far better to see everything drift

free, or even sink in the event of an upset, than to have it stopping you righting your canoe, or worse.



Whether close to your camp, or just close to your favourite launching spot, another traditional role in which the canoe still excels is as a fishing platform. Whether moored to a convenient buoy, or on the move with something tempting (we hope) trolled behind, perhaps at the end of a hand line, our silent craft has helped provide many a decent lunch or dinner. Not, I must admit, that our catch has ever even started to push the carrying capacity of our vessel.

Nor are you likely to require the full haulage capabilities of your canoe when setting out to do a little gleaning and gathering, but it can certainly prove its worth by taking you to somewhere less often visited and therefore less likely to have been picked clean. It can be amazing, for example, how rich the mushroom life can be on an island even only a few yards from the shore.

Of course with any useful stretch of water between where you have something bulky and heavy and where you'd like it to be, the haulage capabilities of your canoe are only as limited as circumstance and imagination allow. I once moved two wheelbarrows from one shore to another. This might not sound very impressive, but the list of other archaeological digging kit making up that load included three shovels, a spade, pickaxe, two mattocks, a dumpy level and its legs and staff, two rolls



The classic canoe task - supporting a camping trip



of orange plastic netting with a dozen steel road pins to hold it up, a very large sieve and about six plastic buckets. The barrows, being relatively light, went on top, and I could only just see over the top to spot my destination.



Fitting a new mooring chain from a pleasant working platform

In a fit of altruism, and after losing my temper with the canal-strewn mess, I once filled the canoe with rubbish. It made a pretty unpleasant load, particularly when I found out how difficult it was to get rid of it all (it's surprising how few and far between, and small, roadside litter bins are), but I did feel I'd done my bit.

A glance at the internet suggests that quite a few canoe owners are using their boats to do something similar, often as part of organised litter-clearing projects. A great idea.

Other canoe loads have included bales of straw, fencing posts, towing ropes and a new mooring chain for a yacht (fitted from the canoe). Out for a quiet paddle I once ended up with a collection of half a dozen orange plastic life belts, complete with yards of tangled floating line. These were found on a Saturday morning, floating with empty cider and beer bottles at various points along the river and canal near Exeter.

And then of course, there are people.

One of the great advantages of the canoe is the ability to add passengers easily to the load. This offers an excellent chance to introduce newcomers to both paddling and the water. Not surprisingly, the canoe is a bit of a magnet to anyone with an adventurous spirit, and while adults don't often allow enthusiasm to override their reserve, a pilgrim in northern Spain being a notable exception, children aren't often so shy. With parental consent, and in the right locations, we've provided

many an outing before now, often fitting three or four youngsters aboard – sat as low down as possible, and each fitted with their own floatation device. Our record haul of children to date is twelve, the water lapping at the gunwale with each shriek and laughter accompanied

wobble. No need to worry though, the hull bobbed about only some two to three inches from the bottom, with the bank sat close to either side of a ridiculously small stream. We couldn't even turn the canoe.

Many of our people ferrying roles have been unexpected, such as providing a lift out to a gently sinking powerboat in a harbour in southern England,

although being reunited with its owner sadly did not prevent it sinking.

International Canoe Rescue has otherwise received few jobs, but in a more successful callout, one day near the mouth of Loch Dunvegan on Skye, we did once swing into smooth, if totally untrained, practice.

We - that's Susannah and me in our Prospector, and Hayley and Steve in their Mad River Explorer - had only just pulled ashore from a very pleasant early morning trip out to Isay. Landing on the almost white crushed coral beach opposite Lampay, we'd spotted the family group over on the island, remarking, that they'd have to get a move on if they wanted to avoid being cut off by the tide. They didn't – get a move on that is - and their plaintive and slightly anxious calls for help soon drifted across the sun-flecked water.

The RNLI publish a laudable list of souls saved every year. To this, ICR can add a rather less impressive, or convincing, two adults, three teenagers and a rather worried looking cocker spaniel.

So whether it's marooned holidaymakers, holiday camping kit, or just some wood for the fire, there is rarely a canoe trip that isn't improved by finding your craft something to carry. Apart from anything else, you may find that your boat performs rather better and is easier to handle with a bit of a load. It is what they were designed for after all.



Fitting a new mooring chain from a pleasant working platform



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ADVENTURES OF A NORTHERN SWEDISH CANOE TRIP

Pablo continues to look at another of the six scientific sub-classifications of species, Cervidae – Deer. Learn of their habits, tracks and sign to help you identify and further understand these creatures in the wild

Ben & Lois Orford show you how to restore and sharpen an old axe head, where to find one, what to look for, and even advice on sourcing and fitting a handle

The story of the original Laue Shelter, traced back to a rucksack in a museum that no one had thought to opened

PAUL KIRTLEY GIVES EXPERT ADVICE ON - Getting To Know Your Needled Trees

SAS Survival Legend, John 'Lofty' Wiseman talks about the wild pets he has adopted on his travels around the world

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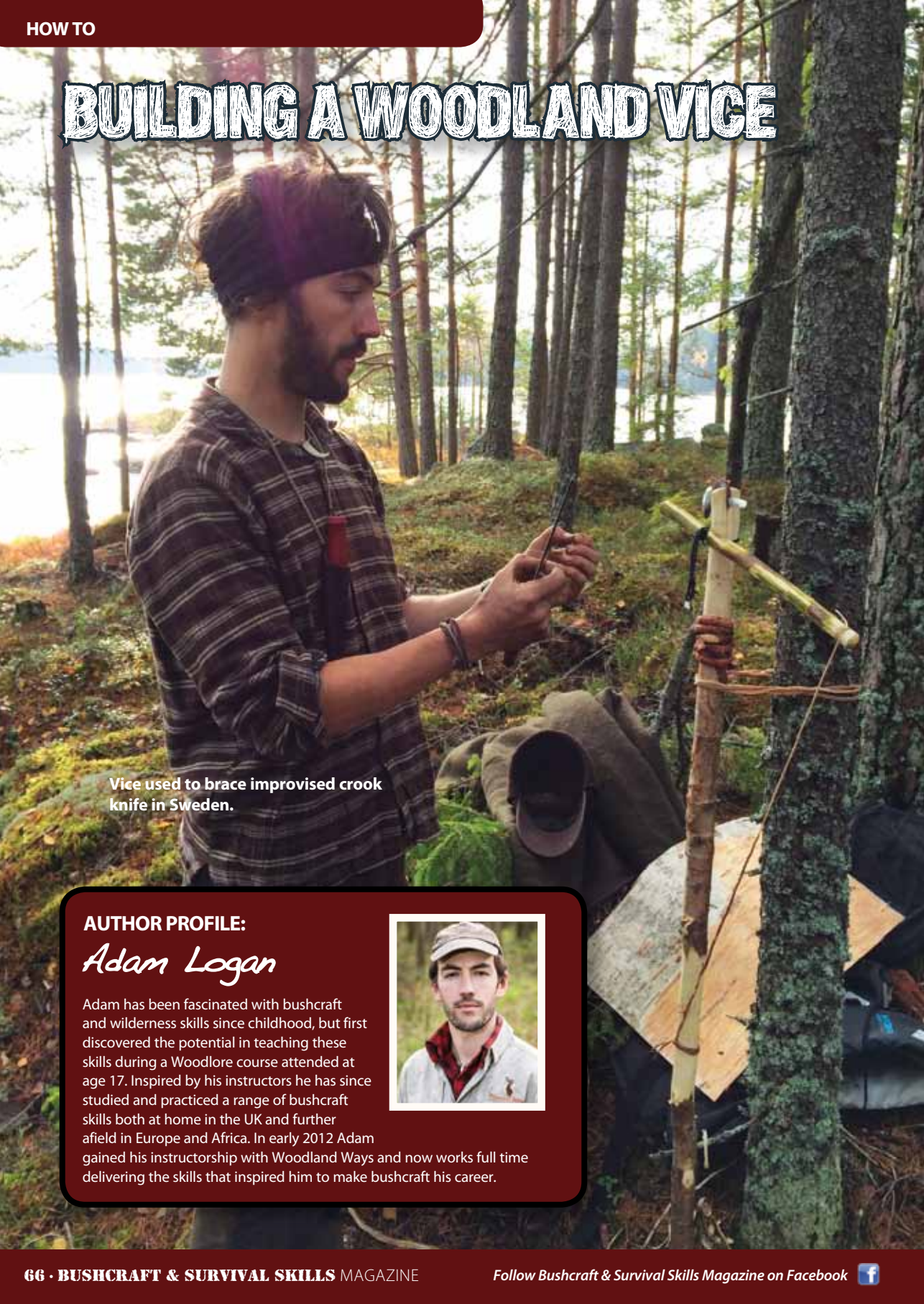
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BUILDING A WOODLAND VICE

A man with a beard and a headband is standing in a forest, focused on a task. He is wearing a dark, patterned long-sleeved shirt. In the background, there are tall, thin trees and a body of water. To his right, a wooden vice is attached to a tree trunk, holding a long, thin object, possibly a knife handle or a piece of wood. The ground is covered in moss and fallen leaves.

Vice used to brace improvised crook knife in Sweden.

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Adam Logan

Adam has been fascinated with bushcraft and wilderness skills since childhood, but first discovered the potential in teaching these skills during a Woodlore course attended at age 17. Inspired by his instructors he has since studied and practiced a range of bushcraft skills both at home in the UK and further afield in Europe and Africa. In early 2012 Adam gained his instructorship with Woodland Ways and now works full time delivering the skills that inspired him to make bushcraft his career.



The concept of the following article comes from a fantastic bushcraft reference book *Primitive Technology: A Book of Earth Skills* edited by David Westcott (1999). On page 88 there is an article by George Stewart describing the use of a 'hands free vice' for helping out whilst arrow making.

We have used a similar idea out in the woods on a number of occasions for different craft projects and with a few step by step photos and a more detailed description we hope to bring this idea to life for you.

This project lends itself well to enhancing a fixed camp along with the ever useful splitting stump, saw horse, cleaving post and mallets. The addition of a vice allows you to tackle more in depth projects giving you the ability to brace a work piece securely freeing up both hands in the process.

The beauty of this design is that it can be scaled up or down to suit your needs. Imagine the exact same set up in miniature bracing a fishing hook ready for you to tie your flies! We recently found this style of vice very useful on our Sweden Canoe Expedition where we improvised some basic cutting tools from old tea spoons. Once the teaspoon was braced we were able to hold a metal file in both hands and really shape the metal effectively.

Materials/ tools needed

- A cutting tool – knife or axe.
- A wooden mallet (poll of an axe)
- High breaking strain cordage – Paracord is ideal
- A swatch of material to act as a protective layer inside the vice. We used buckskin here but an old jay cloth or any small patch of material will suffice.

Your first task is to head out into the DIY stores of the wild wood and collect yourself some materials.



Vice components



Detail of vice showing tourniquet system and friction knot.

Detailed in the photo above you can see a long pole of Ash around 5 feet in length and a shorter thinner pole around 1 foot long. These are the main components of your vice and should ideally be fresh cut or well-seasoned timber as rotten branches will not tolerate the forces put through them with this technique. Ash was chosen in this instance as it is a very strong timber resistant to breaking under tension.

Other materials you will need if you are attempting a build from entirely natural materials are some strong bramble shoots around 3 feet long. This versatile material is available in any season and can provide you with everything from a quick 'withie' style binding to finely prepared fibre twisted into conventional cordage, made in the same way as processing nettle fibres.

Look for those brambles that have the least side branches possible and cut them close to the ground. Once you have cut a length of bramble stand on the tip and pull the end you just cut to put the bramble under tension and then carefully cut away each side shoot holding the leaves. Also remove around the last 10 inches of the shoot, being the youngest growth this is the weakest part of the bramble shoot.

Once the leaves are removed keep the bramble under tension, use the back of your knife to scrape down its length removing all the vicious spines. Alternatively you can use a thick pair of leather gloves for this. If you opt for the knife make sure you clean your blade after as the tannins in the bramble sap will stain your knife very quickly.

The final stage in making this material flexible enough to use on your vice is to gently hammer along its entire length to loosen and separate its fibres. Once done you should manipulate the bramble along its length bending the bramble every which way until you can tie regular knots with it. Occasionally a bramble may break given this treatment so collect a few to begin with.

Next on your shopping list are some pine or spruce roots. Don't worry about the species of evergreen although you want to give Yew a wide berth! Remember not to take more than a couple of roots from each mature tree you use.

A good technique for collecting these is to put your back to the tree and take a couple of good paces away from it and then with either your boot heel or a small branch scrape away the earth in a long line at ninety degrees to the tree until you interrupt the small rootlets radiating out from the tree trunk. You won't need anything thicker than a pencil for this job and around a foot in length.

Once you have found your roots prepare them by first splitting them carefully down the entire length and then using the back of a knife scrape away all the muddy outer bark to leave a strong, clean flexible binding material.

The hardest component to source for this vice if limiting yourself (we would argue you're actually advancing yourself...) to only natural materials, is the tourniquet binding which you wind up to close the vice. Whatever you use has to be incredibly strong and resistant to very high torsional forces as well. Many types of plant or tree fibres are simply not up to the job, but if you can source some buckskin you can cut a long strip of this amazingly



Splitting a Spruce root



Two half roots showing flat sides for binding



Scraping off root bark with back of knife

strong material by cutting an expanding spiral pattern into a swatch. From a scrap of leather the size of a postage card you should end up with several metres of buckskin strap using this technique.

Once you have a good 2 or 3 feet of buckskin cord double it and then double it again to give a really strong length of cord to close your vice with. Alternatively if you have some scraps of para cord kicking around these will do the job admirably.



Clove hitch root binding below split



Buckskin swatch to protect work piece

Additionally we used a small swatch of buckskin to fold into the vice to protect whatever work piece you are securing. Again if you don't have

buckskin, improvise with whatever you have; a piece of jay cloth, scrap of cotton sheeting, clothing or a yellow duster...

Assembling your woodland vice

Once you have sourced and prepared all of your materials you need to choose a spot to locate your vice around camp. Take the long Ash pole and cut a simple point onto the bottom end. Then bevel the top end so that it will hammer into the ground more easily and not split on the top end in the process.

Using a wooden mallet or the back of your axe, hammer in the Ash pole vertically at least 2 feet into the ground. The upright needs to be as stable as possible and you can always brace it to a nearby tree for extra support.

Once the upright is in position take your knife and baton it into the bevelled end at least half a foot down the pole. Remove your knife and then using the prepared roots bind tightly just below where the split ends with a couple of clove hitches. These bindings will stop the split running down further when you load the work piece into the vice.

Next you need to slip the swatch of protective material into the split. This can be tricky now you have the binding in place, so put your knife back in the split and twist to open up the split. You may wish to carve a chisel ended piece of wood to open your vice once it's made.

At this stage your vice will hold an arrow shaft snugly if all you are using it for is fletching as discussed by George Stewart in his article. Although it is perfectly possible to fletch without a vice and jig, this technique does free up both hands for the fiddly job of applying glue and separating feathers in the right places whilst you bind them on to your arrow shaft.



Sharpened end to main Ash pole



Bevelled top of main Ash pole



Ash pole hammered securely into ground



Split into top of Ash pole



Buckskin cord for tourniquet



Arrow held securely in vice



Detail of vice ready for winding bar



Winding bar added through tourniquet for more pressure in vice



Winding bar held at desired pressure with a bramble withie

If however you require more tension on the vice all you do is add your Paracord or buckskin tourniquet over the top of the vice.

And then push the end of the short ash pole through the loop. Don't feed too much of the branch through the loop, just an inch or two is fine.

Then to apply extra pressure start winding up the short Ash pole until the tourniquet tightens and closes the vice firmly around your work piece. The final addition to your vice is one of your bramble withies to hold the short ash pole in position once you have the desired pressure wound up in the vice. Tie a simple clove hitch over the free end of the short pole and then run the bramble down to the base of the main upright ash pole and tie it off.

The genius in this design is with the bramble binding in place you have a hands free securing of any pressure you need. Simply move the bramble binding up the vertical ash pole to loosen the vice and down the vertical ash pole to tighten the vice!

So there you have it, a tried and tested idea with some

new applications for you to test out in the woods on some of your craft projects.

As always keep us posted on Bushcraft and Survival Skills Magazine's Facebook page with photos of your creations and let us know if this technique has been useful to any of your endeavours out in the woods.



Detail of vice in operation



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BUSHCRAFT IN THE FRONTIER,

from Ranger to Scout, Indigenous Skills in the Military



The First Indian War

The practices and knowledge of Western explorers learned from indigenous people have provided inspiration for modern bushcraft practitioners. However, bushcraft also developed through an association with the irregular ranger or scout troops who were first formed during military operations that took place in the difficult conditions of North American frontier regions, before, during and after the Seven Year War (1754-1763).

This martial relationship with indigenous people took several forms: for example conflict was sometimes characterised by Europeans fighting against the indigenous populations, but indigenous people were also recruited (or co-opted) to assist colonial invaders in conflict with other European and indigenous tribes. The development of this type of

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Lisa Fenton

Lisa Fenton has a long established background in wilderness skills education and practice.

She co-founded the internationally respected bushcraft school 'Woodsmoke' in 2001, with her partner Ben McNutt. As an ethnobotanist and ethnobiologist, Lisa is currently writing her doctoral thesis concerning bushcraft and indigenous knowledge. Lisa has travelled extensively, taught many individuals and is passionate about learning from those cultures who still retain a skilled knowledge of how the natural landscape can directly support human life, culture and spirit.



relationship emerges in the early wars in North America, but also continues across other continents and at later times, such as in the Boer Wars and the India Campaigns. In the following text I use terms such as 'Indian', rather than 'First Nations' to reflect, not endorse, the terminology of the time.

Learning to fight like 'Indians', from 'Indians'

The King Philip's War, otherwise known as The First Indian War (1675-78), marks the first armed conflict between Native Americans and the European New England settlers, with their Indian allies. These early colonists faced major challenges in fighting the Indian inhabitants. The native Indian did not engage in military pitched battles in the customary and regimented ways with which the British were familiar, rather, they utilised stealth and reconnaissance tactics to target an adversary, followed by a swift and unsuspected raid upon their intended victims. The Indians were adapted to their 'harsh' environment and could travel vast distances by day and night, in any season, by foot, snowshoe or canoe in order to effectively carry out their raids. In contrast, European linear frontal assault proved totally ineffective against the stealth tactics of the native enemy and unsuitable to the terrain in which such encounters took place. Therefore the survival of the frontiersman became dependent upon adopting the tactics of his enemy – the Native Indians. As such, Europeans began to embrace the skills of the Indians to defend against their raiding parties by sending out patrols to 'scout' the surrounding areas for potential stealth attackers in the hope of gaining the advantage of advanced warning. By assuming many of the Native Indian wilderness living skills and transportation technologies, these 'scouts' became skilled at travelling vast distances, and the distance or 'range' that these patrols would cover depended much upon season, equipment and supplies. Those who joined 'ranging' patrols became known as 'rangers'. However, the term goes back to thirteenth century England where it was used to refer to a 'far-ranging' forester, gamekeeper or 'borderer'. By the

seventeenth century the term was used in Britain as a title for irregular military groupings such as the 'border rangers' who operated along the troubled border of England and Scotland. The term followed early settlers to North America.



Captain Benjamin Church (c. 1675) New York Public Library



Major Robert Rogers 1776 by Thomas Hart and Johann Martin Will, Reynolda House with no further reference

The first Ranger units

Colonel Benjamin Church was the captain of the first Ranger force in America and is significant inasmuch as he is one of the first Britons to learn how to emulate Native American methods of warfare. He learned to fight like an Indian by being taught by the Indians and developed his ranger units exclusively under the tutelage of allied Indians. Church eventually developed a full time unit that contained, for the first time, both white frontiersmen and Native Indians that operated skillfully as irregular troops to carry out offensive strikes against their enemies using the fluid, deceptive methods of the natives (*To Fight with Intrepidity: The Complete History of the U.S. Army Rangers, 1622 to Present*, by John D. Lock and Harold G. Moore, 1998). In this way the American Rangers came to acquire their bush skills directly from the Native Indian populations and such troops tracked enemy Indians into the swamps and forests where they carried out ambushes on their camps. Eventually, the use of Indian allies and the techniques of ambushade became common among both French and British forces, and by the time King George's War broke out (1744-1748) several 'ranging' companies had been formed, such as those belonging to Captain Daniel Ladd and Captain Ebenezer Eastman (John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier*, 2005, p. 35).

In 1746, aged fourteen years old, Robert Rogers, already a skilled woodman, hunter and

trapper, joined Captain Ladd's company and began to acquire the skills and techniques of frontier warfare and went out on patrol, but did not yet engage in battle. Later he joined Eastman's company and continued to learn about guerrilla warfare tactics used on the frontier by the French and the Indians. Eventually promoted to the rank of Major, Rogers is best known for his successful Ranger corps 'Rogers Rangers' that contained only the most experienced frontiersmen whom he knew by person or reputation, who had been taught their ranging skills by the allied indigenous populations. Trained by Major Robert Rogers as a rapidly deployable light infantry force, Roberts Rangers conducted special operations against distant targets during all seasons and so the British valued them highly for their ability to gather intelligence about the enemy (Timothy J. Todish, and Robert Rogers, *The Annotated and Illustrated Journals of Major Robert Rogers*, 2002). Moreover, Roberts Rangers were one of the few non-Indian forces capable of operations in harsh winter conditions and mountainous terrain and thus Major Robert Rogers became one of America's most famous Rangers - his "Rules of Ranging" are still taught at the Army Ranger School today and indeed to British Commando units.



Self portrait of Frederic Remington (1861-1909)

Learning to Scout: the Apache Indians

Jumping forwards in time and moving south to The Wild West and the Apache Wars, we go from 'ranging' to 'scouting' and can see the beginnings of how Euro-Americans learn how to scout - that is from the Apache and Navajo Scouts.

The US Army sent Brigadier General George Crook to take command of Indian operations in Arizona Territory in 1882, where the Apache had taken up arms against the U.S. army under the leadership of Geronimo. Geronimo is probably the most notable Apache warrior of that time period, but he was not alone; he belonged to a Chiricahua Apache band. Crook was an experienced Indian fighter who had long since learned that regular



Pencil sketch of Geronimo.
Native American leader of the
Chiricahua Apache. (1829 -1909)

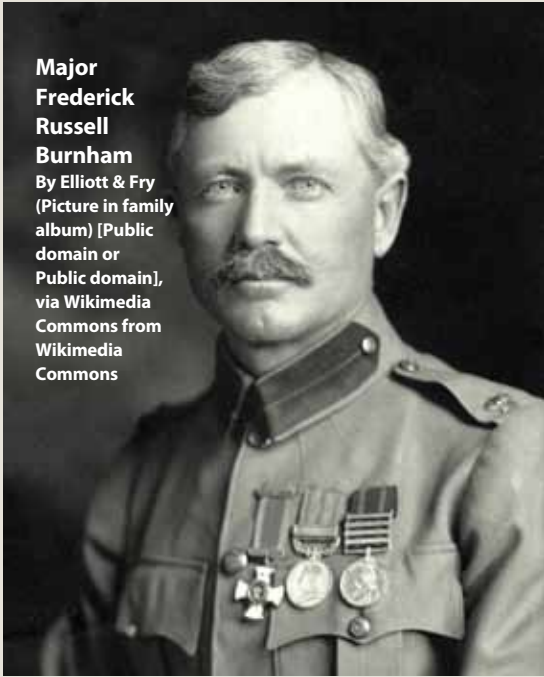
soldiers were almost useless against the Apaches and had based his entire strategy on employing "Indians to fight other Indians" (Louis Kraft, *Gatewood & Geronimo*, 2000, p34). Thus, Crook employed the assistance of Navajo Scouts, who were part of the United States Army Indian Scouts between 1873 and 1895. During this period there were usually ten to twenty-five scouts attached to units, but during the Geronimo Campaign United States Army records indicated that there were about 150 Navajo scouts.

General George Crook used the skills of the Navajo scouts in finding Geronimo and between 1881 and 1886 succeeded in repeatedly forcing the surrender of the Apache, but saw Geronimo escape.

Born in Minnesota on a Sioux Indian reservation in the American Old West, Frederick Russell Burnham (1861-1947) learned the ways of Native Americans as a boy. By the age of 14 he was supporting himself in California while also learning scouting from some of the last of the old cowboys and frontiersmen of the American Southwest. Burnham worked as a tracker for the U.S. Army during the Apache and Cheyenne wars, where he became a military scout and Indian tracker. However, Burnham had learned his craft from a lineage of scouts who had scouted under the celebrated figures of Kit Carson and the aforementioned General Crook. Kit Carson (1809-1868) was a mountain man and trapper in the West and a trailblazer and Indian fighter. He also lived among and married into the Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes. Burnham, feeling that the Old American West was becoming too tame, left to fight for the British Army in the Second Matabele War campaign in the new frontier of South Africa. His impressive frontiersman's tricks, agility and scouting habits were repeatedly demonstrated in keeping him and his men alive during the regular scouting sorties against the local Ndebele. Burnham

was appointed chief of scouts to the commander of the imperial relief force, which formed part of a wider network of irregular troops who carried out raids against the Ndebele. The adventurous nature of such events were eagerly taken up by the British press, who frequently wrote about and pictured the irregular troops of the Field Force, dressed in Stetson hats and neckerchiefs and

depicted as representing the height of rugged and daring masculinity, heroic adventure, patriotism and brotherhood.



Major Frederick Russell Burnham
By Elliott & Fry (Picture in family album) [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons from Wikimedia Commons

The development of 'Scouting' on the South African Frontier

Frederick Selous (1851-1917) was a British explorer, officer and hunter, famous for his escapades in South-East Africa. His real-life exploits motivated Sir Rider Haggard to create the fictional Allan Quartermain character in his 1885 novel King Solomon's Mines. Following extensive explorations in the Congo Basin, Selous joined the First Matabele War (1893), and was wounded during the advance on Bulawayo. It was during this incident that he first met fellow scout Frederick Burnham, who had only just arrived in Africa and who continued on with the small scouting party to Bulawayo. Selous was to have a prominent role in the fighting that followed, and it was during this time that he encountered and fought alongside Robert Baden-Powell who was then a Major and newly appointed to the British Army headquarters staff in Matabeleland. A highly influential character, Selous' Scouts were later to be used for a unit in the South African army



Frederick Selous stamp

and this unit is credited as being the model for today's Special Air Service. See *The Life of Frederick Courtenay Selous, D.S.O.*, by J. G. Millais, 1919.

It is said that it was these two famous American scouts, Burnham and Selous, who taught Baden Powell his woodcraft and scouting skills, see Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, 1993. Baden-Powell certainly acquired much of his scouting ability during the Matabele Campaign in Africa and in addition Baden-Powell frequently mentioned the name of Jan Grootboom, who appears to have been a Xhosa from the Eastern Cape (although Baden-Powell refers to him as a Zulu). Grootboom had arrived in Matabeleland as a wagon driver for a missionary at the height of the campaign. Grootboom distinguished himself as a courageous and exceptional man, especially when it came to scouting around the Matabele camps, and had previously been a tracking and scouting companion to Burnham. Grootboom and Baden-Powell worked closely together, scouting around outposts and, it seems, developed a great respect for one another. It is also clear that Baden-Powell learned yet more about the skills and stealth of the scout from his regular interactions and excursions with Grootboom. Baden-Powell writes of Grootboom:

He had the guts of the best of men...to do our job he and I used to ride out from our outpost as soon as night had set in. This enabled us to get through the intervening 25 miles of country in good time to conceal ourselves near the enemy position at dawn, then to ascertain his exact whereabouts by observing his camp-fires as they lit up for cooking the morning meal. Our work lay among rocky outcrops. I found with my rubber-soled shoes I was able to get about more rapidly than Jan and in fact the enemy. In this way the enemy got to know me fairly well; they gave me the name of 'Impeesa'- the beast that creeps about at night (R. Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign*, 1897 1896:71).

And so it was that through Grootboom, Baden-Powell also acquired much of his 'spooring' or tracking skills and in the Matopos hills he learned the subtleties of studying his enemy and natural camouflage. He learned that observation and deduction were the core skills of successful scouting: and as such he writes... 'a few grains of displaced sand here, some bent blades of grass there, a leaf foreign to this bit of country...the impress of a raindrop on spoor...' (Baden-Powell 1897: 42)



Robert Baden-Powell stamp



An illustration of Jan Grootboom, an African Scout

These historical influences upon the modern conception of bushcraft and its practices demonstrates a genealogy of bushcraft skills that travels through the adoption of indigenous techniques and technologies for long range travel and survival in challenging wilderness, into western military scouting and ranging practices.

Aspects of these indigenous skills arrived finally into the receptive interests of Robert Baden-Powell whose enthusiasm for 'scouting' became so widely noted and established through his later literary works, his 'Boy Scouts' manual, and his youth movement that ensued, in which much of his accrued woodcraft and scouting skills became codified into manuals for boys.

A note from the author

This historical outline is one of three original pieces of research kindly featured for publication in *Bushcraft and Survival Skills Magazine*. The research ideas contained in these publications are the original ideas of the author, Lisa Fenton, with regards to bringing together historical accounts in order to elucidate the historical genealogies of the modern concept of bushcraft, and also to demonstrate the historical relationship between bushcraft and Indigenous knowledge. These accounts thus form aspects of a chapter of her PhD research, and as such she kindly asks that ideas contained in these works be properly referenced to the author as unpublished PhD research material sourced from an article published here in *Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine*, making mention of both this publication and the author if used for any further works, academic or otherwise.

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THE CANIDAE FAMILY

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Pablo

Pablo is a life-long wildlife enthusiast. He has a military and law-enforcement background and has a wide range of teaching and training qualifications. He uses a combination of bushcraft, tracking and fieldcraft skills to get close to wildlife. He has tracked wildlife in various locations around the world including Southern Africa. Pablo runs Woodlife Trails; a Bushcraft and Tracking school and Woodlife Social Network, a site dedicated to wildlife, tracking and bushcraft.



You will find that all species of animals not only have a common name in every language, but they also have a Latin name. They are also categorised in what is called taxonomy. This is a system devised by a Swedish chap way back in the 1700s called Carl Linnaeus. Linnaeus was responsible for suggesting that all species should have a binomial (two names) so that everyone in the world would be able to know what species they were talking about wherever in the world they came from. It just so happened that the language was Latin - which was spoken quite a bit then amongst scientists - but not so much now.

Linnaeus was also responsible for devising a system of nested hierarchy starting with kingdoms and being further sub-divided into classes, orders, then genera, and species. Modern taxonomy now includes a rank of 'family' between 'order' and 'genus' and it is a number of these families that I am going to concentrate on in articles this year.

There are six or so families which are quite common to the British countryside and with each issue I will try and describe the species within that particular family. We will also explore their habits and most importantly have a look at their tracks and signs. I'll be giving out a few tracking tips with each issue as well.

It just so happens that animal tracks also fall into six main compression shapes. To help you out, I will try and show you how the track fits into the compression shape so you will be able to categorise the tracks quickly and perhaps identify the species at a later date. So let's start off with the Canidae family group ...

The Canidae family group includes dogs, wolves, jackals, coyotes and foxes although the latter sub-divide later in the taxonomy to form 'vulpines' genera, while the domestic dog stays with the genus 'canis' with the wolves. Dogs are thought to have evolved from a now extinct species similar to a grey wolf. Wolves roamed freely in parts of Britain, but were hunted to extinction about the time Linnaeus was developing his taxonomy - so really we only have dogs and foxes in this family to explore on these shores.

They are in effect very similar animals in many ways. They are both particularly social and they both scent their territory with urine and faeces. Both also have similar anatomical features, in the main, but there are some important differences, which we'll have a look at in a moment. Their tracks and signs are quite similar as well, although again, there are some subtle differences.

Dogs nowadays are somewhat removed from the predatory nature of their ancestors and their cousins, the fox and wolf. They have the ability to scavenge as most dog owners will know, but, of course, dogs are much more domesticated and mostly rely on humans to provide them with food. The wild nature of dogs has been discussed in depth many times and I'm sure you will have read that they revert to type now and again by, for example, burying their food (caching) and shaking a toy (breaking their prey's neck). 'Walkies' is a great time to prove that they can hunt with the best of them and are keen to lead the pack i.e the human in a hunting expedition! In fact their domestication by humans pre-dates agriculture, so they were in fact assistants in our primitive hunter gatherer life-style.

Dogs rely on scent more than any other sense and they tend to follow a 'scent cone' emitting from the source of the scent, which is why you will see a dog meander from one side of a path or trail to another. This gives us a clue in differentiating between a series of dog and a series of

fox tracks. The fox trail will usually be straight while a dog trail will invariably go from side to side as it stops often for sniffs and scent marking.

Even though foxes come from the Canidae family they have both dog-like and cat-like features. They have cat-like triangular ears for better hearing,

but a dog-like long snout to enhance their sense of smell. They certainly have the behaviours of both - the agility of a cat and the sniffing tendencies of a dog.

Foxes have a keen sense of smell as you would expect from a member of the dog family. They also have very long whiskers (vibrissae) - longer than their domestic



dog relative and more like a cat. The vibrissae collect additional sensory information around them and the vertically slit pupils allow them to hunt in all light conditions. That's why you will see them during the day and night. Their day eyesight is not that good at close range, but is pretty good at noticing contrasts and movement.

Even though they are opportunists and scavengers, foxes are also superb hunters. They are more attuned to hearing at lower frequencies, picking up sounds like leaves rustling on the woodland floor, but they will also pick up higher pitched squeaks of small rodents and rabbits. This may give you an idea of how you can 'call' a fox in. Perhaps rustle some leaves, twist a feather against your fingers, or make a squeak like a rabbit by making a "kissing" sound on the back of your hand.

This time of year you may hear eerie shrieks coming from the woods, fields or probably even city streets. Foxes mate during these months and the cold air carries their screams even further than normal, especially at night, making for an eerie cacophony of sound. The scream is most likely a mating call by vixens.

Foxes will be searching high and low for food at this time, so there will be a lot of fox activity. They must eat frequently because of a relatively small stomach. They are solitary hunters, but at this time of year they may be seen in their mating pairs. If you come across one, you

will notice that their coats look full and shiny. This will become a little more bedraggled by spring when they start to moult and the pups (some people call them 'cubs' or sometimes 'kits') have taken the nourishment out of the mother (the vixen). They will be hunting across open fields at dusk and at night, but will normally keep to woodland edges and the woods during the day.

As we've already said, dog trails seem to meander a lot more as the dog tries to sniff either side of the scent cone while foxes usually have a straight purposeful trail. Foxes are extremely agile. In fact I have tracked foxes in a



straight line through derelict buildings and over 7 foot high fences (I'm certainly not as agile and had to go around!) Their straight-line series of tracks look almost as though they've been hopping on one foot let alone trotting on all four! This is called 'lining' as the tracks appear to be in one straight line. Both dogs and foxes do this, although dogs will tend to make tracks just slightly to the left and right of a centre line. It's a good time to see dog and fox trails (in fact any trails) at this

time of year if there's a bit of frost or snow on the ground.

Fox Print



Both dogs and foxes have similar walking and trotting patterns but their favoured and most efficient gait is trotting. There are perhaps more different trotting gaits by a fox than any other animal which shows they are always on the look out for food and tend to be very cautious especially in open ground. As well as 'lining', look out for a unique side-trotting pattern which shows two leading front paws slightly to the left of the centre-line and the rear paws on the right. The front paw prints will be larger. The whole body will

be at a slight angle to the perpendicular, but the animal will still be moving forward.

Most people want to know the difference between a single fox and a dog print. This is quite easy once you have seen it in real life. The fox print is much more delicate in structure and narrower. The inner digits



(digital pads) are placed much further forward in the track than a dog's pads - so much so that you can draw a horizontal line at the rear of the front (inner) pads and they will not touch the rear (outer) pads (see diagram p82.) The proximal (rear larger) pad is also smaller and shaped more like a chevron or triangle. You may need to be slightly aware of smaller dog tracks, which may lead to confusion. Dog tracks like a Jack Russell's can be very similar to a fox.

If you look at our diagram you will also see four digital pads and most of the time you will also see four quite thick claw marks. Both dogs and foxes are digitigrade; that means they walk on their toes. They have a fifth claw on their front legs, which, through evolution has retracted further up on the limb and serves no real purpose. This is referred to as a dew-claw.

Unless you're tracking in mud, it may be difficult to see all the details in a track - so we at Woodlife Trails advise our participants to concentrate on the compression shape of the tracks. We have drawn in the compression shape on the diagram for you and you will see it is a definite oval

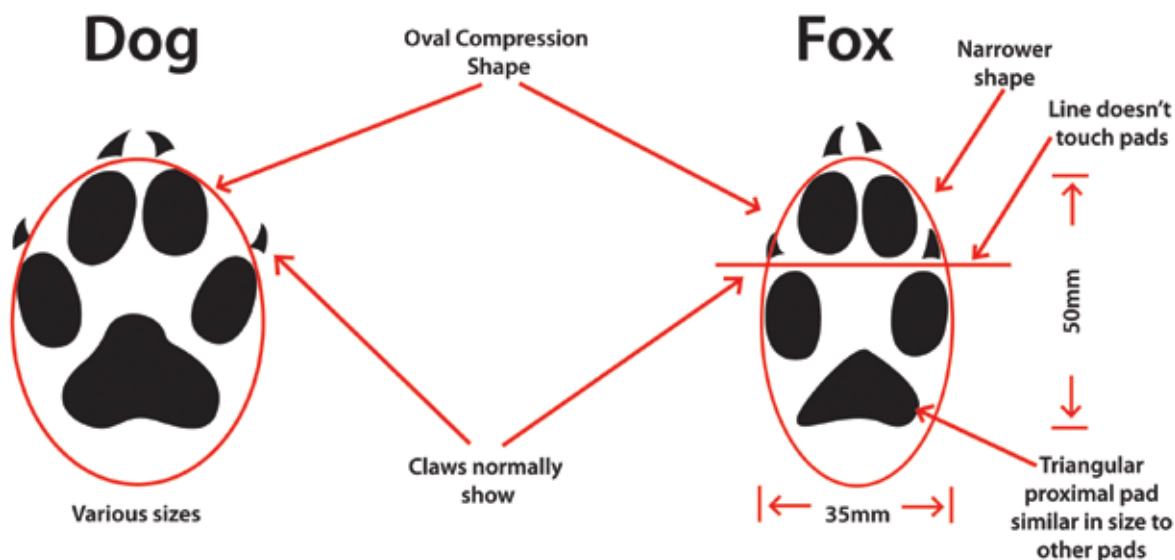
shape. The dog print is slightly more rounded, but still oval. You can compare this to other compression shapes in future articles, like a round shape for cats or a heart shape for deer.

Of course, tracking doesn't just mean looking at prints

made by paws. You should look at all the evidence around you. Fox scat will be quite distinctive with fur and bones in it, as a fox meal will usually include 25% of small rodents, together with bugs and scavenged nuts and berries. You will notice one end of the scat is twisted which is indicative of a carnivore. The scat will also feature on a prominent place on the trail like a small

mound. This is to ensure the wind takes the scent away as far as possible as it's used as a territory marker. Compare this with the yucky features of dog poo and it won't be too difficult to distinguish between the two! An obvious health and safety principle is applied here. You should never touch canine scat as it could contain diseases which are transmitted to humans. Using your own sense of smell you will realise that fox scat is really rich and musky. In other words it really stinks!





While you're on the trail of the fox, look out for other markings like rubbing against a tree or reddish-brown and black hairs caught on barbed-wire fences. Kill-sites are quite common in woodlands or on the edges of woods. If you look carefully at the end of feathers at a kill site, you may see that they may be cut as with a pair of scissors. This is where the fox (or perhaps smaller ground predator) has bitten off the feathers when attempting to pluck them out of the bird. Compare this with a bird of prey kill where the end of the feather will normally be

splintered or split. Usually the fox will bite out a number of feathers at once and this might indicate the difference between a fox or stoat kill.

You can now see that our Canidae family have similar descriptions, but vastly different habits and behaviours, which is reflected in their different tracks and signs. More often than not you will be looking at a dog track in populated areas, but it's worth a second look as foxes are probably more common than you think.

PABLO'S TRACKING TIPS

- **Front feet on most animals are generally larger than the rear feet.**
- **Gaits are how animals walk, trot or gallop or run. You can tell an animal's gait by the patterns and the sequence of tracks on the ground.**
- **The best times to track are early morning or evening. This is when you will see the best contrasts and shadows. Try and identify tracks with the sun in front of you.**
- **In snow look at the yellow urine marks. A female animal will generally urinate between the back feet and a male in front of the rear feet or sprayed on vegetation.**



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WILDLIFE WATCHING & TREKKING IN CROATIA

By Judith Wright

I have just come back from the most amazing week in Croatia with Woodland Ways. My partner Paul and I booked this trip to track wolves, bears and lynx and look at the flora and fauna in Croatia, somewhere neither of us had been before. With great excitement we packed up to stop overnight in London to fly early Monday morning, arriving in Zagreb, Croatia at lunchtime. We met Jason Ingamells and Kevan Palmer from Woodland Ways at the airport with Ana our interpreter and the adventure began. I was the only female in our team other than our interpreter and felt just that, another member of the team.



Judith Wright in Croatia



We didn't expect to see this little fella in the Croatian forests at this time of year - a salamander

Photo: Peter Kent

Firstly and I think quite importantly we headed off to our accommodation for the week, in the mountain village of Crni Lug. Our room was huge with a super king-size bed, our own bathroom with jacuzzi bath (bliss). Along with the accommodation was breakfast and an authentic Croatian, three-course evening meal from our host Albina. This woman is amazing - and we were all made to feel very welcome. After our first evening meal we had a walk to the local cemetery where the villagers had put candles on the graves for All Saints Eve then back home for some sleep as it had been a long day. After breakfast we entered Risnjak National Park, what a beautiful place. We had a tour around the 4km Leska

trail which gave us an insight into the geology, geography and natural history of the area. We came across a fire salamander just standing on the roots of a tree getting the warmth from the sun. The area had an abundant amount of wood sorrel, lots of varieties of fungi, shaggy ink cap, cauliflower mushroom and lots of bracket fungi. After a stop for lunch Jason found a lynx track and looked like the cat that got the cream - I even think he did a little dance, ha ha. We also saw sign of red and roe deer. Shortly after we saw the wolf track Jason and Kev had come across earlier. The day finished in the woods with a sit spot where we hoped to see something, prints of deer and wild boar were everywhere to be seen earlier but not tonight.

It seemed a long walk back home, but we saw a toad on the path on the way back before enjoying another amazing meal.

On day three we explored the park and found the source of the River Kupa. The water is 8 degrees all year round and the source of the river is the largest spring I've ever seen and is more than 150 metres deep. Walking along the banks downstream we found numerous deer and wild boar scat and prints. On the ascent (this bit was to test my fitness) we saw two roe deer, they bounded off when they heard us, but they were a great sight to see. Back for a well deserved bath then a sit spot behind

the house, lots of sign but no sightings probably due to the felling of the trees in area that day, then ready for our lovely evening meal.

The plan for day four was to go to the cabin with Kevan Palmer and our fellow course member Dan with the hope of seeing wild boar, bears and deer spending the night there for sits at dusk and dawn. So after a good breakfast we went to Risnjak to look for sign ourselves. Torrential rain had obliterated all tracks including those of lynx and wolf seen previously. I spotted a tree creeper bird although I hadn't thought it to be a bird when I saw it climbing up the tree. Paul and I followed a stream hoping to see prints, but it continued to rain heavily and eventually we hid under cover to be joined by Mike and Steve, then Kev and Dan. In a break in the rain we joined the others at the beginning of the trail. Kev, Dan, Paul and I then went back home where Albina had prepared our evening meal and we packed bags for our evening at the cabin. The ranger Dragon picked us up at 2pm on the route we said goodbye to civilisation and beyond that point it was truly awesome. Everywhere we looked all we could see were trees. It was breathtaking. The guide explained about the rain that fell



and then froze destroying many of the trees on the mountainside, but above that level the rain fell as snow. The tour information was a good distraction as the drive was pretty hair raising. We arrived at the cabin after about an hour. Despite the heavy rain the cabin was lovely - so much more picturesque than I can say.

As darkness fell along with the rain and our expectations of seeing any real wildlife, we stubbornly sat and looked out during dusk for several hours with only a couple of jays for company. With darkness all around us we lit the wood burning stove and warmed our evening meal which was very welcome after concentrating using all our senses for so long. After eating a hearty meal we then started to relax and settled in for the night hoping for a break in the weather. While watching the rain lightning lit up the sky which was quite spectacular. Fortunately for us the rain stopped about 10 o'clock and Paul and Kev decided to take a look outside. Shortly afterwards Dan and I were alerted to a sighting of wild boar, a sow with 3 offspring came to graze on the corn left by the ranger. Paul and Kev were surprised how loud the boars' grunting had been and the size of the sow. It wasn't long before the rain returned with a vengeance and sleep was all I wanted (not the easiest thing with three men doing wild boar

impressions). The rain was a constant all night and at one point I was kicking Paul for snoring and it wasn't even him, as he was getting dressed in the dark thinking something had been seen. It took him a moment to realise everyone was asleep! Paul woke me (I did sleep after all) at 5.45am to wrap up against the cold as dawn was approaching and against all odds there was a break in the weather. We all took our appropriate vantage points on the balcony ready for the dawn, binoculars and cameras at the ready. Kev spotted a fox and the jays were very playful and then surprise, surprise heavy rainfall until we left. Paul went out to cut some wood for the group going that night so it was dry for them and the ranger came at 8.30am and we left. Returned to Albina's for breakfast and to freshen up.

While we were at the cabin our team had seen sign of bear near where we were staying, so we decided to investigate further on the morning of day five. Even though it was raining we found a trail which found more scat. We followed it and at a fallen branch Paul

was on his hands and knees checking the branch and

found a hair (he was very pleased) and Kev identified it as bear (it was silly smile time). Further on, in an area abundant with juniper and wild carrot I came across several carrot tops which I was pleased to discover had probably been discarded by a bear (wild boar would eat it all). I did mention the relentless rain and my waterproofs proved to be a good investment and worked well – I didn't realise how much water my hat held! We returned for another good hearty meal and some good humoured banter and tales not to be told in a family magazine (Jason Ingamells, Kev Palmer and Dave Watson)!

After breakfast we looked at the nuts that had been collected to identify what had been eating them. We went for a short walk where we returned to the site of the bear scat, having baited the area in hopes of finding fresh sign. We found prints and scat belonging to wild boar. We thoroughly investigated the area until lunch. In the afternoon we returned to Risnjak Park where we did a slow motion stealth walk looking for sign, we heard birds then saw a black woodpecker. We played a recording



of a pygmy owl and in the distance one returned the call. Jason showed us a wild cat print the team had found and also a possible dwelling under a rock/tree root. We then did a sit spot by a large sink hole, unfortunately once again in the rain. We returned for Jason and the team to do a radio interview and I took the opportunity to have a soak in the bath. Good evening meal then some good conversation, mainly about courses we'd done.

On our final day we set off to climb Mount Risnjak, all 1418m of it (in comparison Ben Nevis is 1344m). It was quite steep at times but at least it was dry, foggy but dry, we made it to the top to what I can only imagine on a clear day would be spectacular views. I had a real sense of satisfaction getting up there and looking at 360 degrees of stunning forest. We came down through the beech trees where there was an abundance of fungi. The chamois, a type of mountain goat were nowhere to be seen, but there was sign there. We saw ravens and a variety of woodpeckers on our descent and the fog lifted to reveal a distant coastline. Driving back to Albina's we saw a kingfisher and crane. Once back we went off for a walk - one of the team had seen what they thought were

Lunch at the top of MT Risnjak



Fabulous views



Croatian woodland



Photo: Peter Kent

bear's claw marks so Paul, Dave and I went to see. We actually spotted what looked like three different sets of marks at regular intervals, but not a hair to be seen anywhere. Dave spotted some roe tracks which we followed for a while then back home. Soak in the bath for me then my second clay hair wash. I did give in and bought toothpaste and brushes and gave my teeth a good clean which was surprisingly good. I had brought Alum crystal along for deodorant and soap nuts to wash our clothes and we had been using a natural root to clean teeth so as not to alert any wildlife. Before we left, Jason and Kev gave short speeches and Dave spoke for the rest of the team when he said we'd had a wonderful week.

On a trip of this kind you are truly in the hands of Mother Nature. We were very fortunate to have seen the plethora of wildlife and flora in such a beautiful location set in the real Croatia, welcomed by a small village pop. 200 with no pubs or restaurants (apparently there is a pub opening up soon), as far from a bustling city as it gets, with an old-fashioned authenticity

that is so refreshing. Would I go back to this amazing place.... already booked we go back in April!

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO PREPPERS

By Elaine Gilboy

What is a Prepper?

To be a prepper, or to prep is to try to be as prepared as possible to survive various emergency scenarios. Preppers work on the assumption that the government will not be able to meet all the needs of its citizens during times of disaster. They stock up with supplies of water, food and various sources of off-grid power for heating and cooking, as well as first aid, toiletries etc. As part of their preparedness plans they make their homes as ready for emergencies as possible, while also being ready to leave (or Bug Out) at short notice with essentials packed in a Bug Out Bag, also known as a 72 hour kit, Grab and Go bag, or G.O.O.D. bag (Get out of Dodge - see the table of Prepping terms). In the event of leaving your home the ideal is to have a suitable alternative place of shelter, or Bug Out Location. Once supplies run low Preppers use the skills and knowledge of self-sufficiency they have acquired, alongside tools and kit, to resupply with water, forage for or cultivate food, maintain power and to keep their families safe from looters.



Researching prepping I have to say that with one exception I find the basic premise of prepping entirely reasonable and a greater degree of self-sufficiency would benefit everyone. That exception is the concept of a Bug Out Location, which I find particularly American, perhaps

as in U.S. prepping books and blogs these alternative shelters are usually described as basements or bunkers, which the UK is rather short on. Some lucky people may have second homes in Cornwall or wherever, but travel in the event of an emergency could prove difficult!

Prepping Terminology

BOB - Bug Out Bag

BOL - Bug Out Location

BOV - Bug Out Vehicle

EDC - every day carry, items you carry on your person in case of emergency

EMP - electrical magnetic pulse which may knock out electronics

GHB - get home bag, survival kit to get you home in an emergency

G.O.O.D. - Get out of Dodge, having to leave home in event of a disaster

MRE - meal ready to eat, ration packs

OPSEC - operations security, how to protect information about yourself so potential enemies can't use it, e.g. keeping the amount and whereabouts of your food storage secret

Sheeple - a combination of the words sheep and people, those who think that when a disaster happens the government will provide

SIP - survive/shelter in place

SLAE - significant life altering event

TEOTWAWKI - the end of the world as we know it
Tinfoil hats - term of ridicule directed at preppers, derived from preparing for an alien invasion

WROL - without rule of law

WTSHTF - when the s**t hits the fan

Zombie - someone unprepared who may try to steal from you in an emergency

What emergencies do preppers plan for?

I think one reason why prepping holds such fascination to the general public is that preppers “hope for the best, plan for the worst” and the different types of worst-case scenarios that could happen to civilisation are varied and mind-boggling. Natural disasters include flooding, wildfire, earthquake, tsunami, hurricane and extreme hot or cold weather (did you know the U.S. experienced a cold wave in the winter of 2013-2014 due to a shift in the polar vortex?) To many preppers these disasters are just the tip of the iceberg (sorry couldn’t resist) as they are alert to many other threats. The list below represents the worries of the preppers featured in just the first season of Doomsday Preppers, National Geographic Channel, 2012. (Episodes listed on wikipedia).

- Financial collapse caused by hyper-inflation, national debt or Chinese world domination (?)
- Electrical grid failure caused by EMP, an electrical magnetic pulse which could knock out global electronics (and therefore communications and infrastructure).
- Pandemic, an epidemic of an infectious disease that spreads across continents, such as bird flu.
- Rising sea levels due to climate change or a polar shift.
- Malthusian theory of (over)population - “The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man”. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* by T.R. Malthus, Oxford World’s Classics (2008) p.13 first published in 1798.
- Nuclear radiation from an accident, explosion, or dirty bomb.
- Peak oil, proponents of this theory believe that the maximum production of oil has been reached, so future



production will be in decline, therefore reliance on oil has to be reduced.

- Acts of terrorism.

And this list is from just twelve episodes! Many preppers, or survivalists as they are also known are more concerned about one potential life-altering disaster than another, which means prepping can yoke together some strange bedfellows – from the religious who are preparing for the Rapture (Second Coming of Christ), to New Age environmentalists advocating a return to agricultural self-sufficiency. So prepping is then a loose term encompassing a number of different groups and individuals with differing priorities. It also must be remembered that prepping and survivalism also covers a spectrum of activity, from those with an interest in self-reliance right through to those for whom prepping is their entire way of life.

Prepping in the UK

Concerns about emergency preparedness are not just confined to the United States. While we are very fortunate to live in a country not prone to a long list of



natural disasters, flooding is a very real threat and was experienced in many parts of Britain in February 2014. There are also warnings of potential power shortages as production capacity falls due to the UK's dependency on gas imports and the closure of ageing power stations (see Ofgem report June 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23081695>). Many people, particularly in bushcraft circles are aware of how reliant on imported food this country is and how the Just in Time business model apparently operated by supermarkets in the UK means very little food is held in reserve. In the small Sussex village where I live there was until recently an active Peak Oil community group who held regular meetings and were present at all village events to discuss how we could become less reliant on oil. What is interesting is that as the ideas of M. King Hubbard (who devised the theory of Peak Oil) have declined somewhat in popularity, this group has merged with other environmentally aware people to promote self-sufficiency and encourage the production and consumption of local food.

This pragmatic approach to prepping seems to be characteristic of most UK prepping blogs and resources. As we are a much more densely populated nation than the U.S. and wild places are few and far between,

emergency preparedness needs to be a little more subtle than just heading for the hills. The topics on UK prepping forums also make a pleasant change from the constant discussion of the relative merits of different weapons and ammunition in U.S. resources to "defend" your prepping efforts from unprepared 'zombies', (thugs intent on stealing your stuff). Instead the discussions on UK preppers sites are mainly to do with self-reliance. Becoming more self-reliant – it might not sound as exciting as prepping, but bushcrafters have been doing it for years!

Books recommended on UK preppers websites

Collins Gem SAS Survival Guide by John 'Lofty' Wiseman (2010)

The Essential Guide to Back Garden Self-sufficiency by Carleen Madigan (2010)

How to Live Off-Grid by Nick Rosen (2008)

Practical Self Sufficiency by Dick and James Strawbridge (2010)

Collins Gem Food for Free by Richard Mabey (2012)

Books from respected U.S. preppers

Prepper's Pantry: The Survival Guide to Food and Water Storage by Jim Jackson (2014)

When All Hell Breaks Loose by Cody Lundin (2007)

The Prepper's Blueprint: The Step-by-Step Guide by Tess Pennington (2014)

The Practical Preppers Complete Guide to Disaster

Preparedness by Scott Hunt (2014) See my review of this book on page 98 of this

issue and win a copy.

This is the start of a new emergency preparedness series - in the next issue, start your journey as a prepper and learn what to include in your very own Bug Out Bag.





The end may not be nigh. There may be no apocolypse.
The banks may never fail. We don't provide answers.
We provide preparations.

FOLLOW A DEER STALKER

To my mind one of the most telling tests of someone's bushcraft ability is whether they can consistently provide food for themselves in the wilderness. In the UK we aren't free to use some of the primitive skills which we might practice as bushcrafters to pursue game for consumption, such as archery and trapping, but what I hope to show in this article is how a deer stalker uses bushcraft skills to successfully hunt, kill and process a deer.

Just as a complete knowledge of bushcraft includes ecology a deer stalker needs the same, specifically a knowledge of deer ecology. In the UK we have six wild species of deer, two of which are native, four of which have been introduced at one time or another since the last ice age.

You also need to know the sex of the deer and when the hunting season is for each species, to ensure that you operate within the law. These seasons exist to ensure that young deer dependent on their mothers are not orphaned and that deer populations are offered some respite from hunting. In the medieval period the closed season was known as 'fence month' and lasted from June 9th to July 9th.

You also need to ensure you have selected the appropriate weapon to kill the deer you are expecting to find. Although the primitive skills

you may practice as bushcrafters might include archery, the law in the UK prohibits the use of arrows, spears and other primitive weapons for killing deer. The law also stipulates a minimum rifle calibre for use on deer.

In England and Wales the minimum calibre for Chinese water deer and muntjac is .220 (that's 0.220 inches) with a bullet weight of 50 grains and a muzzle energy of 1000ftlbs and the calibre

AUTHOR PROFILE:

Geoffrey Guy

Geoffrey is a game management lecturer at Reaseheath College specialising in gamekeeping, deer management and countryside/outdoor recreation. He has a particular interest in bushcraft and is involved in research projects looking at the educational value of bushcraft. He has been able to use some of this research towards the requirements of a Masters Degree in outdoor education which he is currently studying.



A range of rifle cartridge cases suitable for shooting deer; .222 Remington, .223 with bullet, .243 Winchester, .308 Winchester, .270 Winchester, 6.5*55 mm with bullet

Species	Male	Female	Close Season (England and Wales)
Red Deer	Stag		1 May – 31 July
		Hind	1 April – 31 October
Roe Deer	Buck		1 November - 31 March
		Doe	1 April - 31 October
Fallow Deer	Buck		1 May - 31 July
		Doe	1 April - 31 October
Chinese Water Deer	Buck	Doe	1 April - 31 October
Muntjac	Buck	Doe	No Close Season
Sika Deer	Stag		1 May – 31 July
		Hind	1 April – 31 October

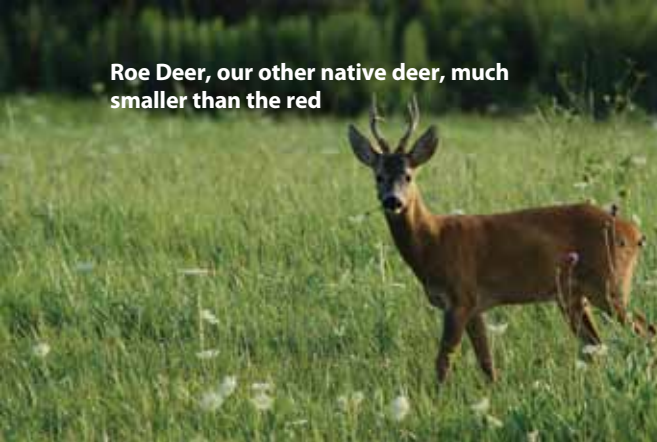


Red deer, our largest native land mammal

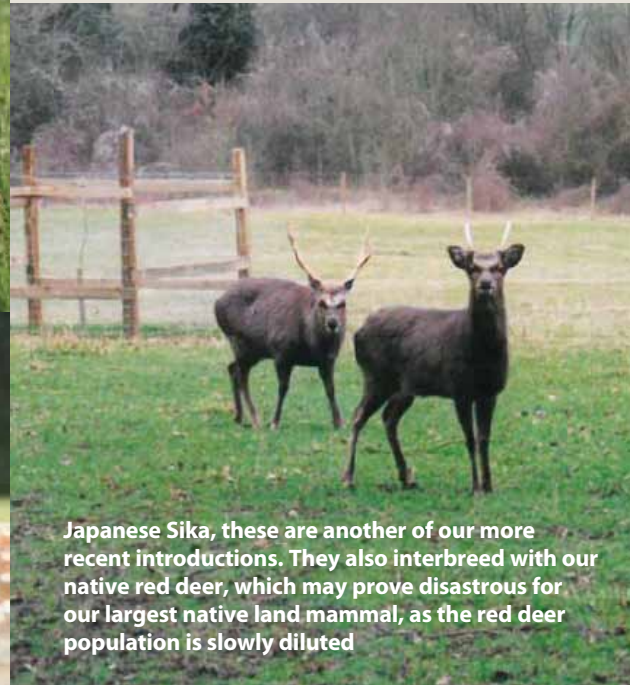
Photo by David Carr



Reeves' Muntjac, the smallest of our wild deer and according to the fossil record one of the oldest deer species on earth



Roe Deer, our other native deer, much smaller than the red



Japanese Sika, these are another of our more recent introductions. They also interbreed with our native red deer, which may prove disastrous for our largest native land mammal, as the red deer population is slowly diluted



Fallow deer, introduced after the Norman Conquest as a "beast of the chase", an animal intended specifically to be hunted. Of all the UK deer they are the most variable in colour.



Chinese Water Deer, introduced much more recently, first to parks and private collections and becoming established in the wild since the late 1800s. Unique among the wild deer of the UK as it has no antlers

A block of ballistic gelatine showing the devastating wound caused by a high velocity rifle bullet, in this case a .243 Winchester



for all the other deer is a minimum of .240 (0.240 inches) with a muzzle energy of 1700ftlbs and no specific bullet weight.

Although an arrow is heavier than a bullet, it does not deliver the same energy, due to the fact that it travels much slower. An arrow also does not have the destructive capabilities as it slices through flesh rather than smashing through, therefore causing much less damage than a rifle bullet and therefore a less humane kill.

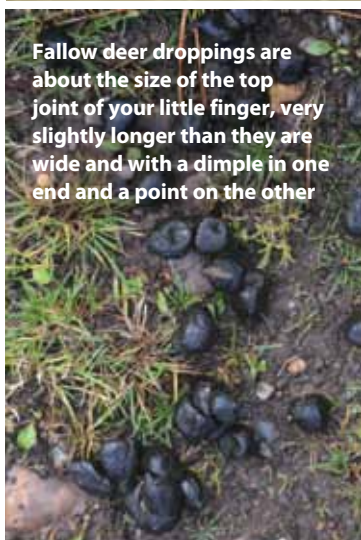
Once you actually start your stalk your bushcraft skills will really be tested. Can you move quietly? Can you determine which direction to move in to ensure the wind does not take your scent to the deer? Can you identify the tracks and sign which might give you an idea as to how recently there have been deer in the area?

Deer stalking can also be a great opportunity to see other wildlife, enjoy the scenery, gather wild food (other than venison) and just enjoy the outdoors. A typical outing might go something like this.

An early start to prepare kit; waterproofs, first aid kit, knife, binoculars, map, torch and water bottle and of course rifle and ammunition. Walking boots are the footwear of choice as a single stalk may be several miles long.

You very rarely shoot the first deer you see and you may see many deer without ever firing a shot. Maybe it's the skinny muntjac doe that may have a recently born kid hidden somewhere in the long grass that you can't shoot in case the kid is left orphaned. Or the deer you see that are out of season. But even if you never take a shot you will almost always see plenty of wildlife. I often see a marsh harrier while I am out stalking in Cambridgeshire, also barn owls and

Fallow deer droppings are about the size of the top joint of your little finger, very slightly longer than they are wide and with a dimple in one end and a point on the other



The larger deer species make wallows which often betray their presence by their smell before you see them



Sometimes the prints won't be clear, you may have to rely on more subtle clues such as disturbed leaves and scuffs in the grass caused by running hooves



This is not a sign specific to deer as sheep and goats have the same dentition, but this half bitten half torn bite mark can be indicative of deer



there is one particular tree where a little owl often sits. On one trip I spent so long watching a pair of adult otters and their cubs that I didn't realise there was a muntjac buck stood about forty yards behind me until it barked and ran off.

Finally after several hours of walking (or very occasionally after only a few minutes) you might spot a deer, you now need to approach to within firing range, ideally as close as possible but certainly under 200 metres and make sure that you are in a safe position to fire a shot. That may involve a long wait or even having to forego a tempting shot because the animal is stood on a ridge line with no safe backstop for the bullet to go into. Maybe you'll have to crawl the last few yards and will have to wait for your breathing and heartbeat to calm before you're ready to fire. Or maybe you'll get the shakes with the nerves of not wanting to throw away what might be the only shot of the day.

After you have shot a deer you will then have to process the carcass to make the most of the meat, skin, bones and other materials that it can give you.

Many bushcraft skills are still in daily use by deer stalkers all over the country, just as others who work in the countryside still use skills such as green woodworking, coppicing and trapping which we might now practice more commonly as a hobby.

How to start deer stalking;

The first thing is to obtain a licence for an appropriate firearm, these applications are made through your local constabulary's firearms licensing department at a cost of £50 for a Firearms Certificate (FAC), these prices are currently being reviewed and are likely to go up in

The end of a successful stalk on the first day of the Fallow season



There is plenty of meat even on a small deer, this picture shows the joints of meat, offal and skin from a Chinese water deer



Skinning a deer is a fairly easy process, other than the first cut you normally don't even need a knife, you can just peel the skin off with your hands

Delicious medallions of venison loin





the next few months. This licence will last five years, but before it will be granted you need to show the police that you have adequate storage, a gun cabinet and ammunition safe bolted to a suitable wall, and permission to shoot on someone's land and/or a planned deer stalking outing that is booked with a professional deer stalker. Stalking under the supervision of a professional stalker can cost as little as £60 per outing for a single animal, but can cost in excess of a thousand pounds if you plan to shoot a trophy stag/buck. This is the simplest way though as professional stalkers are normally allowed to let you use their rifle while under their supervision so you don't need to go to the length of obtaining your own gun.

Gaining permission to stalk over someone else's land may well just be a case of asking around, but deer stalking is valuable so unless you are in a position to offer your services as a deer manager, culling deer, which would be a service to nature reserves, farms and forestry, you may well have to rent or purchase the rights to shoot deer. It's hard to say exactly how much this would cost as it varies so much depending on species, where in the country you are, the numbers of deer, the perceived

quality of deer on the land in question and any number of other factors.

As a rough guide; deer management licences on Forestry Commission (FC) land, which go out to public tender, normally cost around £100 per animal to be culled (based on roe deer), however the FC do insist that stalkers on their land have both the DSC 1 and DSC 2 certificates.

These are both certificates of professional competency relating to deer stalking and also include a licence to handle and sell game meat to a game dealer. If you are serious about getting into deer stalking it would be very sensible to get your DSC1 at the very least. This includes a marksmanship test, a deer identification test, a theory test which relates to the ecology of deer, laws and legislation and other topics related to stalking, a safety test and a game meat hygiene test. For more information about the Deer Stalking Certificate visit <http://dmq.org.uk>

The main assessment centres offering DSC certificates are The British Association for Shooting and Conservation <http://basc.org.uk/> and The British Deer Society <http://www.bds.org.uk/>

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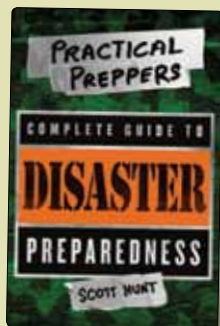
Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY ELAINE GILBOY

PRACTICAL PREPPERS COMPLETE GUIDE TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

by Scott Hunt, (2014) £10

Scott Hunt is a Prepper consultant who has a background in engineering and runs a farm with his family in South Carolina. He has a popular website and Youtube channel and is on the advisory board for National Geographic's popular Doomsday Preppers series. He was a Christian pastor for ten years and from reading the book he seems like a genuinely nice man who writes engagingly and with passion on the subject of emergency preparedness.



The book begins with a quick rundown of all possible natural disasters, along with man-made disasters including nuclear accidents, chemical spills and economic collapse. Not to forget the scenario that puts all preppers' knickers in a twist - a massive EMP (electro-magnetic pulse) caused by a nuclear explosion or solar flare which could disrupt all electrical

equipment and plunge the world into a new Dark Age. This is sobering stuff, which is often discussed with a bit too much relish, but the book is down to earth and practical with real-life examples. Rather than panicking, Hunt's philosophy is that "preparedness empowers individuals, removes fear and reduces anxiety".

The book is split into chapters on Water, Food, Shelter, Power, Medical, Bug-Out Plan, Security and Preparing and Your Community. These are then subdivided into sensible sections, so Water discusses Storage, Resupply and Purification. There are little gems throughout the book - the Food and Shelter chapters are particularly strong - but, and it is a big but - so much of it is just not relevant in the UK.

Examples include what type of well to have on your land, growing and processing your own wheat, what type of off-grid power to choose, having an advanced medical kit with IVs, the pros and cons of various firearms, or the rules for forming community prepping groups. However, there is so much nonsense written on prepping that it makes a nice change to find an expert who believes in living sustainably everyday and not just looking ahead to the apocalypse.

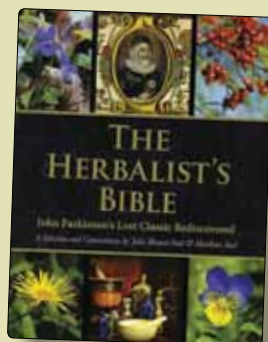
I would recommend the book as an interesting look at prepping in the U.S. and as a prompt to improve your own self-reliance, but UK readers will have to use different methods to get there.

THE HERBALIST'S BIBLE

John Parkinson's Lost Classic Rediscovered

by Julie Bruton-Seal and Matthew Seal, (2014) £25

John Parkinson (1567-1650) was Royal Botanist to King Charles I and a master gardener, (he was the first to describe more than 30 British plants) herbalist and apothecary. His masterpiece, the beautifully presented and illustrated *Theatrum Botanicum* (The Botanical Theatre) was published in 1640 and was hugely influential, as well as just huge at 1,788 pages long. At the time the science of botany to describe and classify plants was just emerging from herbalism, which was concerned with identifying and cultivating edible and medicinal plants and Parkinson's book combined scientific observation with traditional medicine. The excellent introduction explains the historical context of Parkinson's original and why it is still relevant. Seventy five plants, from Agrimony to Yarrow are then described.



The left hand page has Parkinson's description of the plant and its uses (or Vertues) with a superb engraving of the plant and its roots, while the right hand page has the plant's modern description with a colour photograph.

This is a handsome volume and has been well researched - my Dad would approve as there are comprehensive Appendices - but it is far more practical than a coffee table book. Each plant's entry also has authoritative advice from author Julie Bruton-Seal, a practising medical herbalist, on how to use each plant to treat different ailments. It is lovely to see how these confirm the remedies in Parkinson's original 375 years ago. Julie and husband Matthew have written other books including the bestselling *Hedgerow Medicine*, (2008) and I don't think Parkinson could have found anyone better to bring his superb herbal back to life.

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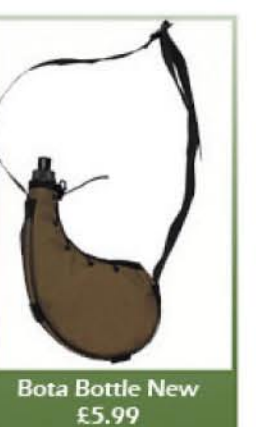
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